




Speech By  
**Hon. Mark Bailey**

**MEMBER FOR MILLER**

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## **VEGETATION MANAGEMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (2.18 pm): I rise to speak wholeheartedly in support of this legislation. I make the point that there has never been an electoral mandate for weak vegetation management laws in this state. In 2012 the LNP went to the people and said that they were not going to touch vegetation management laws. They clearly deceived the people of Queensland, because that is exactly what they did. They lied to the people of Queensland—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stevens): Member for Miller, could you retract that word please. You know that it is unparliamentary language.

**Mr BAILEY:** I withdraw. They deceived the people of Queensland by doing exactly the opposite of what they said was their platform. What we are seeking to do is to rectify that and we have received a mandate not once but twice. In 2015 and 2017 the people of Queensland voted in a Labor government and this has been part of our platform. It is now a majority Labor government, and I am very pleased to see that this law will pass.

Why should members vote for it? Members should vote for it not because of the political posturing of members on the other side of the chamber. It is about science and it is about knowledge. With carbon emissions we are seeing the warming of the planet at an unprecedented level. Some members have made the point that this is all about extreme green ideology. Let me read from a document which I will table from one of those extreme green organisations—NASA.

Members would know about NASA. NASA are that group in the US who have to have such a precise understanding of science to get rockets in and out of space. They tend to know what they are talking about. They have a vested interest in knowing what they are talking about. In NASA's global climate change document there is a very interesting graph showing carbon dioxide levels in parts per million. We have generally been in a band of about 160 to 300 parts per million over many centuries. Now we are at a level of 408 parts per million and surging above that. If you have not thought about what impact that is going to have on everybody in this state, including farmers and everybody who is associated with it, then you are not being serious.

Let us get beyond the silliness about this being about votes and preferences and blah, blah, blah. This is about science and this is about knowledge. It is clear and there is consensus: 97 per cent of scientists around the globe agree that human induced climate change is happening. It is having an impact and deforestation is part of that. We have to do our share in Queensland to make sure that we have responsible management to ensure that deforestation does not occur at unsustainable rates. This bill does not prevent it. The opposition has made some alarmist comments. Saying that it will destroy farming families is just nonsense. It did not occur when the Beattie government brought in strong vegetation management laws and it is not going to happen now. There has been a lot of debate. This has not been rushed in. This has been discussed for the last couple of years. It is a responsible measure to what is in fact an extremity. Climate change is in itself inherently an extremity and it is surging.

This government will act on climate change and we will act on it on multiple fronts. On the renewable energy front that is exactly what we are doing and our position is well known. We have 25 large-scale renewable energy projects, and growing, to transition into clean energy. This is another part of our responsible approach to dealing with climate change here in Queensland. I table the NASA global climate change document, with some data that I just referred to.

*Tabled paper:* Web pages titled 'NASA Global Climate Change, Vital Signs of the Planet, Climate change: How do we know' [\[592\]](#).

I also table for the benefit of the House and members some information on climate change from the Office of the Chief Scientist—in fact, the previous Office of the Chief Scientist.

*Tabled paper:* Office of the Chief Scientist, Australia: Occasional paper series Issue 8, October 2013, 'Climate change: the story so far' [\[593\]](#).

This is symptomatic of the scientific consensus on this issue. I know certain members will play to their base—and there is a certain level of that in politics, as we would all admit—but this is a critical issue. We all have to contribute to dealing with climate change because every one of us will suffer. We are an interconnected state, nation and global community and we all have to be part of the solution.

This bill responds to the climate change crisis. The rate of tree clearing has sky rocketed in Queensland, reaching 395,000 hectares in 2015-16—the highest since 2003-04. This is a 33 per cent increase. This is equivalent to roughly half of the forest cleared in the Brazilian Amazon rainforest in 2016. That is a shocking fact. A third of that—138,000 hectares—was remnant forest. Almost half of it was in the Great Barrier Reef catchments. That is a fact. The total is equal to a thousand football fields a day. Land clearing is directly responsible for two plant species becoming extinct in the wild. There are 45 million tonnes of emissions generated in Queensland alone from land clearing.

Queensland is responsible for 90 per cent of Australia's emissions from land use—90 per cent. That is not sustainable and cannot continue. Anybody who votes to continue that is not thinking deeply enough about this issue. This is a worldwide issue which we are contributing to and we need to solve, and we have the resources and the know-how to do that. We have become the hotspot for land clearing, accounting for between 50 per cent and 65 per cent of the total loss of native forests in Australia over the last four decades. Over one million hectares of woody vegetation, of which 41 per cent was remnant vegetation, was cleared in Queensland between 2012-13 and 2015-16.

Many members on this side have spoken very eloquently. I do not wish to repeat too many of them. There are a lot of people in my constituency who want to see me support strong vegetation management and tree-clearing laws and that is exactly what I will be doing. I acknowledge people like Michele from Annerley who said to me, 'Stay strong on land clearing. I'm asking you to take a stand for the hundreds of thousands of hectares of beautiful bushland, rainforest, savanna and heathland—some hundreds of years old—wiped out every year.' I acknowledge Jennifer from Yeronga who asked me to vote yes on this bill and said she was horrified at the rate of destruction of Queensland habitat.

I have heard a lot of nonsense here—attacks on the data, attacks on SLATS, the Statewide Landcover and Trees Study. This is a methodology that has existed for 30 years across successive governments. There is more data and more evidence now than there has ever been. If members opposite want to take a short-term view and sell out future generations in terms of impacts on climate change, if that is the story they want to tell to their grandchildren, by all means do that. They are the ones who will look back on this debate with horror that they did not vote for strong vegetation management laws and tree-clearing laws.

This is not just about being on the right side of history; it is about being on the right side of evidence based policy, of science, of knowledge. That is what we have to be about as a species, as a state, as a country and as a global community. I say to everybody in this chamber: even if you are bound to vote a certain way by your party, have a good look at the science of climate change. This is not something that is a green left ideology or extreme. This is not some Labor Party conspiracy. This is something acknowledged by the scientific institutions around the world like NASA that understand that we have to go forward on the basis of knowledge. That is the way that we all advance as a community.