




Speech By  
**Colin Boyce**

**MEMBER FOR CALLIDE**

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**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (GREAT BARRIER REEF PROTECTION MEASURES) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr BOYCE** (Callide—LNP) (4.12 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate of the Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. I declare that I am a landholder who will be affected by possible ramifications of this bill. The details of my landholdings are available on my register of interests.

This bill is nothing more than an unprecedented attack on agriculture and rural and regional communities situated on the eastern fall of the Great Dividing Range, from Gympie to the tip of Cape York. It is based on flawed, manipulated science that is driven by a socialist political agenda that is more interested in ideology than environmental outcomes. The science is untested and cannot be replicated. The peer review process is a farce and has been corrupted. Of the four peer reviewers of the Great Barrier Reef status report, two are from James Cook University's coral reef centre, which is responsible for much of the work in the report. They are therefore not independent in any way and are reviewing their own institution's work. The other two reviewers are not even scientists. One trained as a political scientist and economist and undertakes research in the field of public policy and governance, with particular interest in public policy relating to sustainable development. The other has a background in law, particularly relating to Indigenous issues. One can only guess why such friendly or seemingly unknowledgeable reviewers were selected to scrutinise the report. This is a complete bastardisation of and total disregard for the proper scientific method—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Weir): Member for Callide, that is unparliamentary language. I ask that you withdraw that.

**Mr BOYCE:** I withdraw—and therefore, in my view, corrupt. It seems that corruption sits easily in the ranks of the current government and should not be of surprise.

Mr Richard Horton, editor-in-chief of the *Lancet*, among the world's oldest and most respected medical journals, said of peer review—

... we know that the system of peer review is biased, unjust, unaccountable, incomplete, easily fixed, often insulting, usually ignorant, occasionally foolish, and frequently wrong.

This statement sums up the report of the peer review of the Great Barrier Reef. There has been massive exaggeration of the threats to the Great Barrier Reef. The reef is in good health, contrary to the report. There is almost no land derived sediment on the Great Barrier Reef where 99 per cent of the coral lives. It is all sparkling white coral sand. Sediment plumes caused by major flooding events in rivers like the Burdekin only ever touch just a few of the over 3,000 reefs that make up the Great Barrier Reef. Even on these few reefs, the sediment plumes last for only a few days and often do not reoccur for many years. The Pacific Ocean currents flowing into the reef continually flush the reef, purifying and cleaning the water. These tides and currents carry as much water in eight hours as all of the rivers in Queensland do in a year. That is why the water on the Great Barrier Reef is sparkling blue, clear and clean.

The amount of coral on the southern part of the Great Barrier Reef increased by 250 per cent between 2010 and 2016, even after major cyclones destroyed huge amounts of coral. It has also recovered very strongly from bleaching events. Since reliable records began, the amount of coral on the reef and its growth rate have not declined. Lots of coral occasionally dies from bleaching, cyclones and native crown-of-thorns starfish plagues. It looks terrible—just like a bushfire on the land—but it always grows back strongly.

The science being used to damage our farming and tourism industries has not been properly checked, tested or replicated for certainty. Land based sediment settles close to river mouths and does not impact 99 per cent of our Great Barrier Reef. On-farm sediment traps, farm dams, public dams and weirs trap large proportions of land based sediment that flowed to the river mouths for thousands of years.

This legislation makes cattle grazing, horticulture and cropping an environmentally regulated activity, ERA. Every farmer and grazier without an accredited environmentally regulated management plan, ERMP, will have committed an offence and be liable to a fine of up to \$78,330 under the Environmental Protection Act 1994 the day this legislation comes into force. Section 440ZG outlines prescribed contaminants entering waterways, including leaves, bark and animal excreta. I refer to schedule 9 of the Environmental Protection Regulation 2008.

The legislation makes no allowance for natural disasters and weather events such as drought, flood, fire and cyclone. This legislation directly conflicts with the Vegetation Management Act 1999 and the 2018 changes that locked up 1.7 million hectares of land, with 465,000 hectares being in the six reef catchments. This will result in a long-term increase in woodland thickening, erosion and weed infestations; however, the legislation categorises the results as a failed score on the A, B, C, D framework. Some 33.7 million hectares of land in six Great Barrier Reef catchments are blanketed by one-size-fits-all legislation. The bill alleges that agriculture is wrecking the reef and places a disproportionate blame for water quality and sediment run-off on Queensland farmers and graziers, despite the abundance of evidence that the Great Barrier Reef is actually in good health.

The committee process has blatantly ignored generational experience and evidence from farmers and graziers in submissions and public hearings. The fact that you are a farmer or grazier now means that you will be engaging in an environmentally regulated activity and, in simple terms, the government is proposing that buildings full of bureaucrats will now oversee what you do. This is yet another example of the Orwellian socialism taking control, implemented by a Labor government that is anti farmers, anti coal, anti fishing, anti tourism and anti regions.

I note that the member for Mackay is publicly calling for a halt to these reef laws. The time draws near to vote on this bill, so will she run her colours up the mast and cross the floor? I doubt it, for I believe the honourable member to be nothing but a charlatan. She is only paying lip-service to her regional electorate in the vain hope that she may keep her job. Many speakers have raised the issue of climate change.

**Mrs GILBERT:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member is misleading parliament. I take personal offence and ask him to withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Weir):** The member takes personal offence. Will you withdraw those remarks?

**Mr BOYCE:** I withdraw. Many speakers have raised the issue of climate change in their address, including the minister. I believe in climate change. It is a normal, cyclic event that has been happening for millions of years and will continue to happen. Climate alarmists make outrageous claims that we will all die from sea level rise, temperature rise and climate events and are being called out. Their doomsday predictions, including the demise of the Great Barrier Reef, have not eventuated.

Recently Dr Michael Mann, lead author of many IPCC articles on climate change, has been exposed as a fraud in the courts for refusing to show in open court his R2 regression numbers behind the world famous hockey stick temperature graph. The graph first appeared in the IPCC 2001 third assessment report and has been an iconic image used ever since by environmentalists clamouring for urgent action on man-made global warming, including the effects on the Great Barrier Reef.

Yesterday in the federal Senate a motion was passed that will create a Senate inquiry into the identification of leading practices in ensuring evidence based regulation of farm practices that will impact the water quality outcomes in the Great Barrier Reef, and it includes six points in the terms of reference. I believe this inquiry will expose the manipulated, flawed and incomplete science that is being used to underpin this bill. The process of this bill should be halted until this Senate inquiry has run its course. I will not stand idly by and see our farming and grazing communities vilified as environmental vandals by socialist fake Greens-Labor climate dogma. The Great Barrier Reef is an iconic national treasure and should be managed and protected properly, so let us get the facts right first. Legislation that will have severe and detrimental effects on regional Queensland should not be tolerated. I do not support the bill.