




Speech By  
**Dale Last**

**MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN**

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Record of Proceedings, 27 March 2019

## **NATURE CONSERVATION (SPECIAL WILDLIFE RESERVES) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (2.54 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Nature Conservation (Special Wildlife Reserves) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. I say at the outset that I support my colleague the member for Broadwater and other members on this side of the House in opposing this bill. Once again, we are seeing transparency taking a back seat to political point-scoring in Queensland. Once again, we are being asked to support bad legislation that is not focused on making Queensland better—legislation that is instead focused on feel-good announcements and photo opportunities. Once again, we are seeing legislation in this House that has not been fully thought through, and once again we are being asked to support legislation where consultation is nothing but a buzzword.

You cannot govern for the betterment of Queensland when your gaze goes no further than the inner city. You cannot treat primary producers and Indigenous Australians with contempt, and you definitely cannot turn your back on some of this state's key industries. But once again those opposite have done just that. The feedback from across Queensland—from individuals, industry bodies and community groups—on this legislation is damning to say the least. It is a dark day for Queensland when the Queensland Law Society says that legislation introduced by the law-makers of this state is not good law. It is a sad day for Queensland when legislation is purposely ambiguous and it is a sad day when a government decides that a newspaper ad is sufficient notice that generations of work may be thrown on its head.

We only need to read the first few pages of the committee report into this legislation to see that the Queensland Law Society is correct and that this is bad legislation. When a committee dominated by the government recommends increased consultation and amendments to improve public accountability, you can understand that the Law Society is correct. Let us be clear: this government has no respect for primary producers without doubt. This is because they simply do not understand and do not value the hardworking men and women of the agricultural sector. This is not just evident with this legislation; we are seeing this time and time again.

The LNP holds serious concerns about the impact special wildlife reserves may have on adjacent agricultural producers—impacts similar to those experienced by landholders adjacent to parts of Queensland's national park estate where inadequate management of pests, both animals and weeds, continues to impact negatively on agricultural producers trying to make a living on their land. That saying that is going around Queensland at the moment that the worst neighbour you can have if you are a landholder is the state government is an absolute disgrace and a reflection on this government because they are not fulfilling their role as owners and trustees of Crown land throughout Queensland.

A lack of clarity provided by the department about how owners with special wildlife reserves will be policed in the implementation of management plans on special wildlife reserves only adds to these concerns that, once declared, there is a good chance that these reserves will not be adequately

managed and adjoining landholders will suffer as a result. If we use national parks as an example, then I have grave concerns about how these special wildlife reserves will be managed, because in many cases our national parks have been completely abandoned. They have become refuges for pests, weeds and feral animals. They are overrun. There are no longer rangers living on a lot of these national parks. They have simply become wild, feral habitats that are a poor reflection on Queensland.

How can this government claim to support Indigenous communities without specifically noting that Indigenous people are materially affected by changes to their traditional lands? Let us be clear: Indigenous communities in Queensland are seeing this government for what it is. Instead of helping Indigenous communities to advance, this government is stifling them.

The Premier has said many times in this place that her government is focused on jobs. What about the jobs that the communities of Cape York want? To make it worse, this is not the first time. Indigenous communities were ignored when this government rammed through vegetation management laws and we are seeing it again here today. It is a worrying trend that is coming into this parliament when it comes to legislation that is being rammed through this place without proper consultation by stakeholders and fellow Queenslanders.

Let us look at the agricultural and resources sectors. Once again, those opposite have proved that the agricultural industry is nothing but an opportunity for this government to engage in grubby land grab after grubby land grab. To assume that a neighbouring landholder is not significantly affected by the neighbouring property being turned into a wildlife reserve illustrates perfectly that the minister and this government as a whole have no respect for primary producers. I ask the minister here today: what consultation did you undertake with the resources sector and in particular the Queensland Resources Council? I can tell the House, unequivocally, that the answer is none. I spoke with Ian Macfarlane earlier today and he was bitterly disappointed that the Queensland Resources Council had not been consulted on these amendments to this bill. What a disgraceful act that is that the peak resources body in this state was not consulted on something so important.

I remember when Queensland was innovative, when the government worked with Queenslanders to find solutions. Unfortunately, for Queenslanders and our future, those days are over. A perfect example of that innovation can be seen in my electorate of the Burdekin at the Cromarty Wetlands located within the Wongaloo Regional Park. Cromarty Wetlands is a jewel in the crown when it comes to native birdlife. It is home to the largest congregation of broilgas in Australia, with over 12,000 birds calling Cromarty home. Just last week, some 1,100 black swans were counted at Cromarty.

How was this done? It was not done by locking it up. It was not done by ignoring the generations of knowledge built up by our primary producers and landholders. It was done with common-sense, practical management and that includes grazing livestock—that is right, those animals that those opposite detest. The industry that those opposite are happy to sacrifice to militant greens helped create Australia's largest population of this spectacular native bird. Despite years of experimentation, it was grazing under permit that controlled para grass. Neither fire nor machinery could stop that grass that was degrading these important wetlands, but what could? The knowledge of Queensland landholders is what prevented the degradation, and it is unacceptable that this government is ignoring that knowledge. Not only is this government ignoring landholders and their knowledge in an attempt to prop up the member for South Brisbane; this government does not even value these landholders as important enough to be consulted during the decision-making process.

This legislation is making the governance of Queensland less transparent. This legislation further degrades the rights of regional communities and it must be called out. It does nothing to provide clarity. The interests of regional communities, the state's economic interests and environmental interests are being sold off in favour of deliberately ambiguous language that gives the minister unfettered control. All Queenslanders deserve transparency in government and deserve public scrutiny of the use of taxpayer funds. This legislation provides neither. Regional Queenslanders deserve to be treated with respect and to have their knowledge valued. Landholders in regional Queensland deserve more than a notice in a newspaper when it comes to their family's future.

This legislation should be sounding alarm bells throughout Queensland. It should be ringing alarm bells because it will enable green ideological groups to purchase large tracts of land that will be locked up forever. This backdoor method of locking up our land should be stopped at all costs. This is bad legislation. It is about political pointscoring, and Queensland deserves better. Like my colleagues, I will not be supporting this legislation for those reasons.