




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR NINDERRY

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

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (4.00 pm): I also rise today to speak to the Nature Conservation (Special Wildlife Reserves) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill presented by the Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef on 15 February 2018. These amendments apply to a special class of privately owned and managed protected areas, special wildlife reserves, which are equivalent in conservation merit and protection to a national park.

During consultation with external stakeholders numerous concerns were raised: concerns about the process of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries determining permanent removal of land from agriculture production; concerns about the infringement of existing landowners' rights that are adjacent to special wildlife reserves, such as a 100-metre buffer requirement; concerns about the blanket exclusion of grazing on these special wildlife reserves, especially in times of drought; concerns from the Queensland Law Society in regard to the wording of who is involved in the determination of these special wildlife reserves, such as the loose parameters of state interest—does this mean the minister responsible has the control to make declarations that supersede everyone else's interest; concerns about the lack of clarification within this proposed legislation in regard to future ecotourism proposals on special wildlife reserves; concerns about incompatible land use with the new special wildlife reserve management policies, such as beekeeping, in addition to beef, horticulture and other identifiable land uses; concerns about the ongoing issues with pest management on Crown lands now and how these special wildlife reserve management policies will address future invasive animal and weed issues; concerns about the ambiguous term 'materially affected' and how that would impede one's ability to dispute any issues with land designations and/or land management in court; concerns about which parties would be materially affected and how they would be consulted with respect to the declaration of a special wildlife reserve, such as native title holders not being expressed as a party with land interest; and concerns about the property rights of future landholders and the ability to review or renegotiate a special wildlife reserve as it stands—it appears one would need a revocation via a resolution in parliament.

Protecting our local environment is important to me, my constituents, my family and our future generations. However, it is equally important that these initiatives are executed in a fair, accountable and transparent manner. Legislation that is ambiguous, that leaves overarching powers in the hands of one minister and/or confusion as to where land rights start and end is not reflective of good government. Landowners, traditional owners, organisations and communities should be equal partners working together to create a greener, sustainable future.

The results of this external consultation do not demonstrate collaboration. In fact, the National Parks Association of Queensland and the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland specifically expressed grave concerns with respect to the opportunity for rorting this legislation. As well, the Property Council highlighted the inadequacy of how the minister responsible notified parties through newspapers rather than contacting them directly. The response from this current government does not

provide adequate reassurance that existing land rights will not be infringed upon and that the livelihoods of our rural Queenslanders will not be significantly affected in a negative way. This is not perception. You can hear the fear and the uncertainty in the words of the people being directly affected. The last thing landholders need is less available land for their animals and crops to carry out their livelihood. Our landowners and traditional owners are capable of being good land stewards. They recognise the impact of responsible land use and they understand the need to conserve marginal natural land that still exists. They do not need this government imposing legislation and excluding them from being active participants. They need a government that is willing to work with them.

What I hear and see is a long list of concerns, concerns and more concerns—too many concerns to address in my time allocated here today, which is unfortunate for the people that this legislation will negatively affect. As well, it is unfortunate for the people who were hoping this legislation would have a greater positive impact, as when we all work together we can truly make a real, meaningful, significant difference as opposed to a meaningless, insignificant, government-only driven legislative one.

For the accountability and transparency reasons mentioned and the lack of consideration towards landholders, especially those with native title, I urge this government to move forward in a way that is inclusive to all stakeholders, that encourages collaboration, that will create a greater positive environmental impact and that is supported by the current and future land stewards themselves. Imposing poorly constructed legislation and penalties on people is less effective and does not build a better tomorrow. Perhaps it is time for this government to consider working together with everyone involved to create better ways to help make our local environment, Queensland and the world a greener, healthier place.