




Speech By  
**Daniel Purdie**

**MEMBER FOR NINDERRY**

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### **NATURAL RESOURCES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (4.31 pm): I rise this afternoon to make a short contribution on the Natural Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019, which is an omnibus bill. I want to acknowledge the honourable member for Greenslopes for the detailed history and legal explanation he just gave in relation to an omnibus bill. As a new member in this place, I was enlightened by his contribution. I now know that this is an omnibus bill and appreciate that the library found a bill from a couple of years ago that amended 20 separate pieces of legislation, but today we are amending 32 separate acts. This is a bill which comprises over 250 pages which is extremely large in volume. I want to acknowledge the relevant committee members whom we heard from earlier this afternoon for their detailed deliberations in relation to this bill even though they only had a relatively short time to get through it.

The bill deals with several issues including Indigenous and general land access, gas production tenure management, foreign landownership registers, the Surveyors Act, the establishment of CleanCo and category 2 water governance arrangements. While we will be supporting most of the recommendations made by this bill, we will be opposing three separate amendments which I will refer to shortly. Of great concern, however, is the lack of transparency and accountability once again shown by this government in attempting to combine so many separate pieces of legislation into one bill. Given the government's track record on limiting opportunities for debate and scrutiny, it is deeply concerning to not only me and my colleagues but also key stakeholders, including the Queensland Law Society and the Queensland Resources Council, which have flagged their apprehension in having to consider such an extensive body of legislation in such a short time period. The risk of oversight and of not appropriately dealing with all potential ramifications of these amendments has been clearly spelt out by the Queensland Resources Council, which said—

Even for an omnibus Bill, this legislation is extraordinarily broad in scope, amending ... a staggering 29 different Acts. The breadth and complexity of this Bill makes it very difficult for any stakeholder to be confident they have understood all the ramifications of these amendments in the 15 business days between the Bill being tabled and submissions falling due for the Committee.

These sentiments are echoed by the Queensland Law Society, which stated—

The most difficult position that we have in assisting the parliament in its important business is hoping that we have not missed anything.

These submissions alone are enough reason to raise alarm bells. Instead of taking the time to review, discuss and debate legislation in this chamber, we are today being asked to simply rubberstamp amendments which seek to not only impose on the rights of landholders in this state but also further reduce transparency and give one person—the minister—unfettered power to change or cancel the conditions of an exploration permit in this state.

This is a government that has made its political intent clear when it comes to mining and the resource industry. To further erode the checks and balances that allow this state to reap the rich rewards of a sustainable resource industry is yet another slap in the face for democracy and the rights of all Queenslanders. That is why we strongly oppose clause 260 of this bill which would extend ministerial

decision-making powers to allow a minister to cancel, vary or insert conditions for an exploration permit in an exceptional event. Clause 260 inserts proposed new section 141A which allows the minister to impose, vary or remove a condition of an exploration permit at any time without application or seeking the views from the permit holder if an exceptional event has occurred. These 'exceptional events' are defined as natural disasters or financial crises which negatively affect the resource industry.

Both the Queensland Law Society and the Queensland Resources Council have rightly questioned this very broad definition which, by its very meaning, can be classed as unusual or not typical. The Queensland Resources Council said that this additional ministerial power opens up considerable risk to investments that can be ended on the stroke of a minister's pen. Similarly, the Queensland Law Society highlighted concerns with the use of ministerial discretion without input from the permit holder. According to the QLS, the permit holder—

... is not given the right to be heard in respect of the exceptional event of the proposed change ...

It goes on to say that this—

... does not afford the holder a formal right of appeal in respect of the Minister's decision.

It is abundantly clear that this new ministerial power that grants the minister the power to terminate and change exploration licences is open to exploitation. Given the shifting goal posts that have characterised the Adani project, it is also clear that this government's definition of an 'exceptional event' or 'not typical' is, in reality, as unpredictable as its rail schedule.

The LNP also opposes clause 45, which would allow the state access to private land without consent. This is yet another attempt to undermine the rights of property holders in this state. We have seen how serious the Palaszczuk government is about protecting farmers with its response to the disgraceful and disrespectful behaviour of animal activists trespassing on farms and causing significant stress to business owners and their families. The LNP will not tolerate such shameful attacks and is proposing much harsher penalties for these protesters. Similarly, we do not support clause 45 of this bill which will allow changes to the Land Act to allow an unauthorised person without consent or warrant to enter freehold land if they need to access adjacent state land. We do not believe this is a legitimate reason to be able to enter private land without consent or a permit. The bill breaches a fundamental legislative principle by providing the government with powers to authorise access with insufficient regard to the rights and liberties of landholders. Whether it is by stealth or sheer arrogance, this government seems hell-bent on eroding the fundamental rights of landholders in this state. However, we will continue to call it out and hold it to account.

We are also opposed to clauses 36 and 37 which would remove another layer of transparency in government decision-making. Clauses 36 and 37 remove section 16 of the Foreign Ownership of Land Register Act 1988, effectively scrapping the requirement of the government to produce an annual foreign landownership report. By removing this section, Labor is taking away a key source of data and transparency that Queenslanders deserve when it comes to land ownership. Queenslanders deserve to know who, how much and what types of land are owned by foreigners and multinational companies. The thousands of hectares of high-value agricultural land in this state sustain a profitable domestic and export market that boosts the coffers of this spendthrift Labor government. Queenslanders do not want to see it sold off to the highest bidder.

Overall, this bill attempts to bypass the established legislative process that holds governments to account. By attempting to rush through this legislation, Labor is withholding the opportunity for proper scrutiny and debate and, in the process, failing Queenslanders. Today, we have heard how some of the amendments in this bill seek to erode the rights of landholders, remove accountability and increase ministerial discretion. Only the LNP will stand up for the rights of landholders and hold this government to account. That is why the LNP cannot support this bill in its entirety.