




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

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

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (11.37 am): The LNP will be opposing the Nature Conservation (Special Wildlife Reserves) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 and we will be opposing it for myriad reasons. The deputy chair will outline some of those that were discussed during the committee process. I will outline the three reasons why I feel the bill will not achieve what it sets out to achieve, why it should be opposed and why it should be done in a far more sensible manner.

The first reason is that the bill gives the minister of the day too much power to make a decision with too much latitude on too important an issue. When we put forward legislation in this House, we must be mindful of future governments as well as current governments and we must be mindful of future landholders as well as current landholders. As the bill is set out at the moment, it gives a minister so much power for a variety of reasons to declare a special wildlife reserve. That is scary. I will explain why in a moment.

The second reason is the lack of clarity about the management of these reserves, and the minister has outlined some of the ways that she believes this can occur. The minister spoke about compliance and listed three issues—support, encourage and enforce. Might I suggest to those who have seen the standard of many of our national parks at the moment that there is not a lot of supporting and I am not sure there is a lot of encouraging, but I can assure you that there is not very much enforcing. To say that we are going to use parameters that are so high level and so broad and somehow we are going to get a good environmental outcome I think is being optimistic at best.

The third reason I believe the bill should be opposed is what it does to future owners of a property. I do not believe enough has been outlined as to the reasons for curtailing the future rights of owners of land and the changing circumstances on that land. Many of the stakeholders outlined their concerns. I will get to some of the contributions of stakeholders in a moment.

Firstly, I want to dig down into why I am particularly concerned about the unfettered power being given to the minister. This is referred to in the Queensland Law Society's submission. I will give members a hypothetical example of what is possible to be achieved if a minister has that level of power. Land that could be key for resources or agriculture could be put into one of these reserves by a minister who has the wrong intention and community groups who seek to use this as a stalking horse to attack industries they do not like. That is possible. At the moment we are seeing everything from a multitude of groups that do not happen to be based in this state or even this nation. We are now being told about the flatulence of bovines being a great concern for the future.

It could be that a concerted campaign is waged to reduce the opportunity for people to conduct agriculture in this state and with a complicit minister this could occur. The parameters for declaring a special wildlife reserve are so broad that strategic agricultural land could be taken out of production—

An opposition member: Forever.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Forever. I will take that interjection. A poorly intentioned minister along with a cunning third-party group could remove strategic land forever. That is how broad the power we are giving the minister is.

Ms Enoch interjected.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Minister, I know you are interjecting. I hope you have noticed that in the last five minutes not once have I suggested that that is your intention.

Ms Enoch interjected.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Right, so let us clear that up.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Direct your comments through the chair, please, member.

Mr CRISAFULLI: The powers are so broad that a poorly intentioned minister could use this provision in that manner, and that scares me a lot.

I will turn to some of the feedback from stakeholders. After that I will get on to the amendments and where we are with those now and the consultation that has happened. I will start with the Queensland Law Society. They described this as 'not good law'. I quote from their submission—

The amended drafting actually expands the matters to be considered when preparing a proposal to declare, effectively allowing the determination to be made based upon either or both of:

- the '*economical, environmental or community interests*' (as determined by the minister) under the definition of 'State interest';
- the second branch of the proposed section which may be applied so as to encompass land areas that do not fit easily into the definition of 'State interest'.

It is frightening how broad it truly is.

The Queensland Resources Council—more on them shortly—raised major concerns about special wildlife reserves being declared over land where there is active exploration underway. They recommended a clarification. I will talk about that amendment shortly.

The fact that we have left 'materially affected' to be as ambiguous as possible in my mind takes away the right of dispute in the courts. The Property Council highlighted the inadequacy in terms of how the minister is to notify parties. That notification is via an advertisement in a newspaper. The government manages to be able to find people when they wish to send them a bill. I would imagine the same channel of communication that exists for landholders in that situation should surely advise them that their property is about to be affected. To say that an advertisement in a newspaper suffices is absolutely ridiculous.

The minister was flagging some of the amendments to be moved. We heard a little about first nations people. I will quote from Balkanu's evidence to the committee in the last parliament because they are powerful words. They are quoted in the report as stating—

... there is the potential to misuse strategic wildlife reserves to lock up country from economic development ... generally our position overall is that for traditional owners in Cape York meaningful employment and economic opportunities are critical. We have always been about looking at conservation—

thousands of years, in fact—

while also ensuring that we protect economic opportunities for traditional owners in the Cape. It is the most impoverished area of Queensland, and a job in the Cape is probably very hard to come by compared to jobs down here. Our experience has been that the conservation sector does not provide much in the way of meaningful employment opportunities. It is important, but the grazing sector and other options are also very important.

I want to turn briefly to the amendments. I thank the minister for raising them at this point. What level of consultation has been undertaken with groups like the Resources Council that are impacted by these amendments? What consultation has occurred, particularly since the amendments have been tabled? I want to know: what has happened? Here are some questions for the minister. Can the minister guarantee that there will be no impact on investment and employment decisions by the companies affected by this amendment? Can the minister guarantee that this amendment will have no impact on the \$5.2 billion in resource sector royalties that the Treasurer announced in the midyear budget update before Christmas? Can the minister guarantee that there will be no impact on investment and employment decisions by the companies affected by this amendment? When did the minister know about these amendments being included in the bill? Does the minister know which companies are affected by this amendment?

I am going to briefly talk about this bill which is so broad, so rushed and does not have a detailed focus on making sure that if we are going to create special wildlife reserves that they are special and are something that we can be proud of and do not reflect what so many of our national parks look like at the moment where the only ones who truly get to enjoy them are feral animals and weeds. That is

not good for the environment. If we are going to create areas like this they have to have an environmentally significant outcome. I do not think there is enough focus on the current owners doing that. I certainly do not think there is enough focus on the capacity of a future owner of one of these to do that. This is forever. Once this gets declared there is no turning back.

I hark back to where I started. With the wrong intention, hectares of land that may have a greater importance to the state than being declared a special wildlife reserve could be locked up forever, and that could have negative impacts particularly for many of those Indigenous communities that are looking for opportunities for jobs—real jobs—for their children.

Without attention to detail, we will see what we have seen with other well-meaning but poorly executed environmental initiatives undertaken by this government. I come to one in particular that this side of the House campaigned for, believes in, pushed for and gave every bit of latitude that was needed. When an extension of time was required, we were not petulant. Not once did we come out and say, 'They're incapable of doing it on time.' We let that happen because we wanted it to roll out properly. What did we get? We got a container deposit scheme that has been rolled out without any thought at all and the results are—

Ms Enoch: The results are success.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I take the interjection from the environment minister.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Member, I am failing to see the relevance of this part of your contribution. I bring you back to the long title of the bill.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Mr Deputy Speaker, it is extremely relevant. If you are going to be big on environmental virtue signalling, you have to be big on environmental outcomes.

Mr Dick: What about environmental protection?

Mr CRISAFULLI: My great concern, aside from the welfare of the Minister for State Development, who is howling across the chamber, as is the norm, is that if we do not have the attention—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I will take some advice. Member for Broadwater, I am concerned about relevance. I will be monitoring this. I will give you a bit of latitude to bring it back to the long title of the bill.

Mr CRISAFULLI: It is relevant because good intention without good implementation is worthless. My concern is that, if you combine the breadth of the power afforded to the minister, if you combine the lack of management oversight of these reserves and if you combine the fact that future owners of land, even with changing circumstances, can be bound by the view of one minister at one point in time that then lasts an eternity, that is not going to deliver the environmental outcome that the government is looking for. I believe that it is relevant because every time I stand up in this place and talk about an environmental initiative that this government is trying to implement I point to the lack of attention to detail, and each and every time there is a mess that needs to be fixed up—and so it was with the implementation of the waste tax. It was the same scenario. Because of a lack of discipline, because of a lack of focus—

Ms Enoch interjected.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I take that interjection. I am not quite sure where it came from but it was something about climate change. I have stood in this House and made my views very clear about that, Minister. I will not be verballed on nonsense.

What I am seeking to outline is how poorly thought out this process is. The reason it is poorly thought out is that if you are prepared to put such a great focus on giving ministerial power but are not prepared to put such a great focus on how you are going to get these reserves to be special then it is doomed to failure. The only thing that concerns me more about that is the fact that future generations will be doomed to repeat this because of the binding long-term nature of it.

In closing, I wish to ask the questions yet again of the minister about these amendments and what consultation has been undertaken. I highlight again the poor implementation record of all things environment by this government, whether it be the container deposit scheme, the waste tax, its inability to come up with an effective koala management policy—all of these things. I point to those opposite being all about virtue signalling and nothing about delivery.

I conclude by saying that too much unfettered power rests in the hands of the management, not enough management oversight is there to ensure that these wildlife reserves can be the sorts of areas that we can be proud of and there is the binding nature on future owners. These are the reasons why the LNP will be opposing this bill.