



Speech By  
**Glenn Butcher**


**MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE**

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## **RECREATION AREAS MANAGEMENT (FEES) AMENDMENT REGULATION**

### **Disallowance of Statutory Instrument**

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (6.16 pm): I rise to oppose the disallowance motion moved by the member for Broadwater. The Quandamooka people are the traditional custodians of the Quandamooka estate, which includes the waters and islands of the central and southern Moreton Bay and the coast land and streams between the Brisbane and Logan rivers. These are the people who own the land on which we are talking about. The Quandamooka people comprise the Nughi, Nunukul and Gorenpul clans.

On 4 July 2011 the Quandamooka people were recognised as having native title rights and interests, as Minister Jones has said previously, in 54,408 hectares on land on Minjerribah—North Stradbroke Island.

**Mr Stewart** interjected.

**Mr BUTCHER:** It is a lot of hectares. I will take that interjection. As part of this native title determination, the state government of Queensland and the Quandamooka people, through the Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation, entered into a joint management partnership to manage the Minjerribah protected areas.

I can still remember my first visit to North Stradbroke Island. It was very special. I went over with the mayor and opened a wastewater facility. This is where I got my first plaque as the state member for Gladstone. It was a special time in my parliamentary career. It was critical infrastructure for a developing island. The council knew more and more people were heading to North Stradbroke Island for their yearly trip.

My son is one of those people. He owns a Nissan Patrol. He loves getting over there once a year. I said to him, 'The permit you will have to get and pay for is a monthly permit and it is only going to cost you \$5 extra. It is going to be \$52.70.' He said, 'So?' He knows how important it is when he goes over to these islands in his four-wheel drive, which he does in my electorate—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Everyone knows the standing orders about interjecting across the chamber. Please direct your comments through the chair.

**Mr BUTCHER:** When he goes to these places, he knows how important it is to make sure that people are doing the right thing—and a lot of them do. He and his mates do. However, there is a certain element within society who do not and, with the amount of traffic on Straddie, we need our Indigenous people to be looking after the land and repairing it when things go wrong. When I told him about this, as I said before, he was more than happy to pay \$52.70 a month for his trip to North Stradbroke Island.

Joint management is a specific model of land management arrangements over national parks which comprises significant involvement of traditional owners across a range of land management activities on the protected area. Joint management on Minjerribah empowers the Quandamooka people to be involved in the management of their own country, as we have heard tonight, and to profile their

country and history to the island's estimated 400,000 visitors a year. It has enabled the Quandamooka people to start to meet their aspirations by building an economic base, enhancing their cultural practices and connecting with their country.

In the spirit of this partnership between the state and the Quandamooka people, the Minjerribah Recreation Area was established in 2011 and with it Minjerribah Camping, which is a private company created and 100 per cent owned by the Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation. They own it, run it and look after it. I have a fair bit to do with our land sea rangers in the Gladstone region, and they do a fantastic job. I pay tribute to Kerry Blackman today because he is leading the charge with those young Indigenous kids, getting them into those land and sea ranger programs. They are the future for this island. They will be getting these jobs to look after the island that they own.

Minjerribah Camping manage permits for camping and vehicle access within the Minjerribah Recreation Area and utilise the revenue to administer and manage that area for its ongoing use and protection for all visitors—as I mentioned before, about 400,000 people a year. The vehicle access permit fees, which are the subject of this disallowance motion tonight, are a key part of revenue used by Minjerribah Camping to manage the recreational areas on the island. This revenue enables the Quandamooka people to continue to care for their own country. They are the best managers of their own land and they do it really well.

The revenue also provides employment opportunities, as I said, for young people in particular and ensures that natural and cultural values are kept on the island where they belong and kept in the best possible condition. It also allows for infrastructure and facilities to meet visitor expectations, with increasing visitor numbers that we see each and every year heading over to North Stradbroke Island.

Queensland is lucky to be home to some of the country's best four-wheel drive spots. As I said, I have heard about most of them because my son tells me about them all the time. From inland tracks at Sundown to the pristine beaches on Minjerribah, Queenslanders love to indulge in ecotourism, and key to that is maintaining and providing good access for them when they get to these places.

More and more people are embracing what nature has to offer, and we are seeing an increasing number of four-wheel drives and campers spending their holidays in the great outdoors. I make particular mention of one of the four-wheel drive areas that my son tells me a lot about, and that is where they go and get bogged at Inskip Point down the coast, but that is what these vehicles can do to the beach. They can damage the beach and destroy the area. They all think it is fun. It might be fun to some people, but someone has to fix it. That is what this permit will do. It will supply jobs so that it will make it easier for people who do not have big four-wheel drives to access those areas.

When I speak to four-wheel drivers in my electorate, I am constantly hearing about the need for good tracks and access to pristine beaches, as well as about the need for maintained facilities and camping areas when they finally get to those places. That is what this is all about. It is about giving our local people opportunities to go to great places like North Stradbroke Island to see our countryside, to see our beautiful beaches and to see our inland tracks and do it for a monthly fee of \$52.70. If you take that one holiday a year, it is a monthly rise of about five bucks. As I said, my son said to me that that is quite fair for what he is going to get back. He will get value for his money.

Despite the majority of drivers doing the right thing and using the areas safely, we know that some drivers do the wrong thing, whether it be on purpose or due to inexperience, which a lot of it is, and this can cause problems for other drivers. When you have so many drivers, as we are seeing on North Stradbroke Island, it can become quite a problem. That is why, as part of the need to maintain and improve track access, there is also a need for more safety signage. This is something that I know the state government is investing in right now.

We want visitors and tourists to be able to escape the city and experience the best beaches that we have. We want families to continue their family holidays, fishing and camping on the beach like they do at North Stradbroke Island. This is all part of the Queensland way of life and something that we want more people to be able to enjoy. There is nothing more Queensland than hitting the sand on some of nature's best highways looking for gutters to throw a line in and catch a fish.

Regular four-wheel drivers—and there are many of them here in Queensland—and campers alike, are happy to pay their fair share to access our islands. That is why there has been a need to bring the Minjerribah permit fees up to a comparable rate with other recreation areas around Queensland.

We have also heard reports from visitors complaining about more and more rubbish that is being left behind by the increasing number of campers. That is why it is critically important that we see local Indigenous people on the ground making sure that these places remain pristine like they are, no matter whether there are 10 cars and four-wheel drives or a thousand of them. This is why we are investing in the island's protected areas because we want to ensure that tourists, families, four-wheel drivers and campers have the best experience when visiting such a wonderful island here in Queensland.