




Speech By
Joseph Kelly

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

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NATURAL RESOURCES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (4.24 pm): Before I address the couple of substantive clauses in this omnibus bill that I would like to discuss, I would like to respond to many of the concerns raised by speaker after speaker about omnibus bills—or, as one member put it, ‘ominous’ bills. It has happened in not just this debate but also previous debates. I would have liked to pride myself on being part of the Palaszczuk government that is completely and utterly different from the preceding Newman government, but as I listened to speaker after speaker—every single speaker, after whingeing about not having time enough to speak, read the exact same speech, one after another, and made no new points—I realised that one of the points that was being made again and again was about omnibus bills.

I thought I would take advantage of the excellent library service available here in the parliament and asked it to do some research for me around omnibus bills. There is in fact no definitive definition of ‘omnibus bill’ for the purposes of the Queensland parliament. Generally, though, an omnibus bill is one that covers a number of diverse and unrelated topics amending more than one act. An example of this would be bills that have a reference in their title to amending other acts, such as the Guardianship and Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. I posed the question: how many such bills were passed by the parliament during the tenure of the Newman government? It seems that more than 70 of these bills were put through the parliament. You cannot simply read ‘other legislation’ in the bill title and assume it is an omnibus bill.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stevens): Order! Conversations across the House will not be tolerated.

Mr KELLY: You cannot assume that ‘other legislation’ automatically means it is an omnibus bill.

Mr Powell interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Glass House, the member is not taking your interjections.

Mr KELLY: The library did search for those bills that a speaker referred to as an omnibus bill, and they came up with 17 such bills—although, given the contribution this afternoon by the member for Coomera, I will have to ask them to look for bill debates in which the word ‘ominous’ was used and add them to this total!

I will not go through all of the 17 bills, but I did think one bill would be of interest to the House. The Land, Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013, which dealt with fairly similar matters to the ones we are dealing with here, amended 20 acts. Of those 20 acts, five had no relationship to the area of responsibility of the minister introducing the bill. I suggest that what we have going on here is not good parliamentary debate; it is opposition for the sake of opposition. It is laziness and it is characteristic of those opposite.

I will now talk about a couple of clauses that I think are quite important. I particularly want to look at the dispute resolution issues. A number of constituents have come to see me with concerns in relation to situations where sublessees are having disputes with people who hold a head lease. In particular, a

number of constituents have come to see me in relation to Tangalooma. The amendments proposed in this bill provide a way forward. The frustration for the constituents in my electorate is that they have felt there is no way for them to try to resolve their dispute. They are not looking for a 'winner takes all' situation. They are not looking to destroy the other party. They want to be good sublessees. They want to be people who work with the other party. In the present situation they feel that they have zero opportunity to do that.

The minister and his team have done a great job of listening to people who have these concerns. They have been very generous with their time in terms of talking to people who have these concerns. With regard to the notion that this is a very large bill and there is too much for people to get their heads around, the reality is our ministers are out there talking to people all of the time. They are consulting with the community all of the time. They do not simply walk in here with a bill and say, 'There you go. We're going to ram that through.' This is the result of ongoing discussions and consultations with a whole range of stakeholders. Members have come in here and said, 'This is a large bill. We can't get our heads around this.' If I was a policy officer at the Law Society, I would be embarrassed to stand up and say, 'Oh, this is a bill that covers the exact policy area that I'm employed to understand and I can't get my head around it in 15 working days.' These dispute resolution clauses certainly provide a sensible way forward.

In my remaining time I want to quickly touch on the clauses of this bill that deal with accessing state land via private land. I was on the agriculture committee when it conducted a fairly extensive inquiry into invasive weeds. One of the issues that came up frequently during that inquiry was concerns and criticisms raised by landholders of state owned lands not being managed properly and appropriately and one of the concerns raised by public servants was that they could not access those lands. The provisions in this bill are sensible and require that notice is given, require that those people traversing land comply with biosecurity, require that people do not enter buildings and require that if there is any damage done it is made good. These provisions will be very important in terms of dealing with one of those issues that had been identified on numerous occasions during the inquiries that I was involved with. With those few words, I commend this bill to the House.