




Speech By
Mark Robinson

MEMBER FOR OODGEROO

Record of Proceedings, 15 May 2019

NATURAL RESOURCES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (11.37 am): I rise to make a contribution to the Natural Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. The bill deals with several issues relating to natural resources, among them Indigenous and general land access issues, gas production tenure management, foreign landownership registers, the Surveyors Act, the establishment of CleanCo and category 2 water governance arrangements. I will focus my comments on the broader resource sector issues of the bill and matters most relevant to Aboriginal land tenure issues as they apply to regional and South-East Queensland and particularly to my electorate.

This side of the House wholeheartedly supports Queensland's resource industry, whether gas, mineral, gold or coal, among others. We also support land justice and opportunities for work and prosperity for Aboriginal people on Aboriginal land and on other public and private land, whether in regional Queensland or in South-East Queensland areas like North Stradbroke Island. Sadly, I cannot say that the Palaszczuk Labor government supports our resources industry and jobs, as it has shown that it is willing to play a dangerous political game with the sovereign risk of the whole resource sector by constantly moving environmental and Indigenous land goalposts, whether in the Galilee Basin or on North Stradbroke Island or in Cape York, as we saw with the Deputy Premier today. For inner-city Greens preferences, Labor will do anything, even sell-out Aboriginal opportunity. Having raised my concerns about the Labor government's handling of the resources sector, I acknowledge that in this bill there are some good measures and so I will not be opposing the bill as a whole.

There are some amendments that I do not support and those have been outlined well by other opposition speakers, so I will leave the details of that to what is already in *Hansard*. As others have commented, I have concerns about the size and span of the bill. It is a large omnibus bill that sprawls across 234 pages and amends 29 separate acts. I agree with the Queensland Resources Council in that this bill could not have had the proper due diligence done on it.

The new ministerial power that grants the minister to terminate and change exploration licences is open to exploitation. The QRC has raised serious concerns about the granting of this ministerial power, as it opens up considerable risk to investments that could be ended at the stroke of a minister's pen. The Queensland Law Society also expressed a number of concerns, one being around the minister being given the power to unilaterally impose, vary or remove a condition in an exploration permit without application by the holder where the minister considers that the conditions must be amended because of an exceptional event affecting the permit. People are concerned about the potential of this Labor government to abuse this power and cancel exploration licences purely for political reasons.

There are also concerns about Labor's addiction to the Di Natale-Hanson-Young Greens preferences, which are skewing resource industry and Aboriginal land politics in Australia to the far Socialist Left and, in so doing, risking resource jobs in Queensland both now and in the future. One example of this risk to the resource sector that is relevant to the bill and Aboriginal land in Queensland is the rushed and early forced closure of Sibelco sandmining on North Stradbroke Island. The mine will be closed this year—

A government member: Hear, hear!

Dr ROBINSON:—and all mining jobs gone with it. I did not hear the ‘Hear, hear!’ to the mining jobs gone with it. Over the last few years that decision has cost hundreds of resource jobs as Sibelco was forced to downsize its operations in readiness for Labor’s forced extinction and hundreds more indirect jobs have been put at risk by Labor-Greens laws—jobs in small business, tourism, services, retail, trucking—from many sectors. When governments move the goalposts on the resource sector, that creates problems and introduces risk factors, whether in exploratory stages, extraction, or other stages.

A carefully planned phase-out of the mine was already underway with an economic transition that provided a sensible pathway to a non-mining future and one that was compatible with and coexistent with the native title land rights of the Quandamooka Aboriginal people. Tragically, inner-city, West End, soy latte-sipping Greens did a preference deal with Labor and Labor sold out the Straddie workers, sacking hundreds of resource sector workers, including 30 per cent of the Sibelco workforce who are Quandamooka Aboriginal people. Shame on Labor for that act! I ask today: how is it closing the gap and disadvantage that Aboriginal people face when workers in the mining industry are sacked by the impact of Labor laws? That is a shame on the Labor Party. We do not need more Labor in this state. Sadly, we see this trend of Labor resource policy being dictated to by the Greens and a Shorten-Di Natale government would put our resource sector jobs at even greater risk.

I also want to briefly consider the amendments to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Act, particularly as they may make changes that affect land tenure issues on North Stradbroke Island. The bill amends the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991 to reduce the government’s legislative burden by replacing a subordinate legislation process with a ministerial declaration process. This is said to enable the minister administering the acts to make a declaration about land available for grant as inalienable freehold, the reservation of forest products and quarry materials to the state on those lands, and the management of certain lands that have been granted. The bill also proposes that a public register of ministerial declarations be kept. The bill also amends the Aboriginal Land Act and Torres Strait Islander Land Act to clarify the interpretation and application of certain provisions of those acts. There is range of other details about those changes to those acts.

Owing to the wide span of the bill and insufficient scrutiny, I have concerns about the potential for unintended consequences, or even the potential abuse of power by these changes, as they may affect the Quandamooka people and the future of North Stradbroke Island. Sadly, the government has shown that it cannot be trusted to protect the interests of workers in the resource sector and Aboriginal people on North Stradbroke Island. I will continue to stand up for the Aboriginal workers and the families on North Stradbroke Island, some of whom are doing it very hard. They have not been able to find jobs after they lost their job because of this government’s laws. It is sad that this is happening—

Government members interjected.

Dr ROBINSON: Members opposite are interjecting over my statements about the loss of opportunity for Aboriginal people on North Stradbroke Island.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! Pause the clock. The member is not taking interjections. The House will come to order.

Dr ROBINSON: I will stand up every day of the week and support the Aboriginal families, the Quandamooka people in Dunwich, at Point Lookout and at Amity Point every day of the week. I will support their jobs, I will support their rights to own property, to buy and sell homes—have homes like every other person has the same right. It is a shame—

Ms Enoch interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Minister, that was unparliamentary. I ask you to withdraw.

Ms ENOCH: I withdraw.

Dr ROBINSON: On 6 May, there was a major protest on the island where traditional owners and other local people protested the failure of this government to manage the economic transition, to properly consult and to get the situation right for the Quandamooka people. The government cannot keep ignoring the fracturing of the community that—

Ms Richards interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Redlands, you are warned.

Dr ROBINSON: This government cannot keep ignoring the fracturing of the community it has caused by its failure to properly plan and its non-consultative approach to Aboriginal land use in light of the government’s—

Ms PEASE: I rise to a point of order. I ask about relevance. Can this matter now be brought back to the long title of the bill instead of some ongoing rambling?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Dr ROBINSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, as I was saying—and I thank you for your protection—in terms of the consultative approach to Aboriginal land use in light of the government's forced and abrupt cessation of mining—

Ms Pease interjected.

Dr ROBINSON: I believe the member was under a warning.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, I do not need assistance from you. You have the call. Continue your contribution.

Dr ROBINSON: Otherwise the community angst and unrest, unfortunately, is likely to continue and even grow. I hope it will not. I am doing all I can to work with the different groups.

Sadly, the slow pace and abrasive approach of this government is having a negative impact on Indigenous and non-Indigenous people on North Stradbroke Island. For example, the preferred location of the Aboriginal people of the whale interpretive centre at the cultural centre is being ignored. This government is failing the people of North Stradbroke Island.

(Time expired)