




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

Record of Proceedings, 22 October 2019

RECREATION AREAS MANAGEMENT (FEES) AMENDMENT REGULATION

Disallowance of Statutory Instrument

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (6.52 pm): I rise in opposition to the disallowance motion moved by the member for Broadwater. We have heard here tonight the LNP's scare campaign about a threefold increase. Let me reassure the people of the House and those families—those mums and dads—who go on their camping trip once a year to Straddie that they will pay less than \$5 more. This is what this new fee means. It means that mums and dads, ordinary families, who go on their annual camping holiday will be paying less than \$5 more.

I want to be very clear about this because the opposition are running a campaign that somehow this means—and we have heard it here tonight—that mums and dads who love their fishing will now not be able to afford to go camping for their annual holiday. We have introduced a new monthly permit, which means that those mums and dads who go once a year will be paying less than \$5 more. Those regular visitors, those four-wheel drive enthusiasts that we spoke about, who want to buy an annual permit will be paying more. As we have heard from the member for Capalaba, there is a desperate need to reinvest in the infrastructure for four-wheel drives and the camping facilities on Straddie.

This is the first comprehensive fee review in nearly a decade. Over the past two years we have seen an increase of over 1,000 new permits for North Stradbroke Island. We have heard reports from visitors complaining of more and more rubbish being left behind by an increasing number of campers. These fee increases are necessary to maintain and improve facilities for visitors and tourists.

I want to again reassure the House that a permit is not required to visit beautiful Minjerribah and the amazing attractions it has to offer. I absolutely refute the argument from the opposition that this is a great new tax. This decision was made to make the fees on North Stradbroke Island comparable to other recreation areas in South-East Queensland. As Minister Lynham said, Moreton Island has an annual permit of \$265 and Bribie costs \$50 for one week. These new fees will mean that it is still more affordable to go four-wheel driving on Straddie than on any other sand island. As I said, for most families the increase will be less than \$5.

I reject the claims that the change in permitting arrangements is a tourism tax grab. The costs of managing the recreation and protected areas still far outweigh the revenues generated. I also want to take this opportunity to reassure members of the House that the fees collected through vehicle access permits are invested directly back into the management of the recreation area. In fact, that is a requirement under the Recreation Areas Management Act. Typically, in recreation areas the fees are used by Parks and Wildlife Service to deliver the infrastructure that four-wheel drivers and campers require. However, as we have heard in the debate tonight, the Quandamooka people through their company Minjerribah Camping now collect those permit fees and reinvest that revenue back into the recreation area. These fees will mean they can employ more rangers. That means they can do more compliance activity to make sure that our campers are doing the right thing. We saw the member for

Capalaba table some of the concerns that his constituents have had with the behaviour of some of the campers. Of course, we have also heard from the member for Capalaba about some of the fantastic spend that this government is investing to improve the wonderful recreational areas for tourists.

We are investing \$1.4 million in the next financial year across the island's protected areas because we want tourists to enjoy beautiful Stradbroke Island. This will include improvements to beach access for four-wheel drives and upgrades to Main and Flinders beach camp sites. That is underway right now and will be complete in time for Christmas when mums and dads go for their annual beach holiday, and they will only pay less than \$5 more. Over the next 12 months new projects include improved vehicle access, track maintenance, new walking tracks, upgrades to the lookout, improved—

Mr Nicholls: A walking track with vehicle access?

Ms FENTIMAN: I take that interjection from the member for Clayfield. This is the investment to make it a more attractive place to visit for all tourists. It involves upgrades to the four-wheel drive tracks, but it also involves upgrades to lookouts. It also involves improved access to Brown Lake. It also involves improved facilities at Blue Lake. As we have heard from the member for Capalaba, we will be reopening the Keyholes track before the end of this year. These fees mean that we can properly invest in the infrastructure that tourists and four-wheel drivers alike want to see on this beautiful island. It will mean that in the next few months four-wheel drivers will be able to safely access another part of Straddie that has been a favourite in the past. It is something that we have heard tonight that the opposition have called for and the member for Capalaba responded almost immediately to say, 'We're absolutely onto it. We're doing it and these fee increases make it possible.'

As we have also heard from the member for Capalaba, we are committed to creating a multi area vehicle permit in consultation with traditional owners and the community. This came up at my recent meeting with Shane Rose, the president of Four Wheel Drive Queensland. He said many of his members are very passionate about working with us to create one permit for multiple recreation areas. He is also very keen to work with us and QYAC on involving his members in volunteer activities to help improve tracks and to make sure that they can assist with clean-ups. Mr Rose was very pleased to hear of the investment we are making on Straddie and how the members who travel regularly to the island will soon be benefitting from better four-wheel drive access tracks and camping facilities. We will continue to work with Four Wheel Drive Queensland to ensure their members can continue to safely explore the beautiful sands of North Stradbroke Island.

In relation to consultation, I take members opposite back to their consultation when they decided to reverse ending sandmining on Stradbroke Island—which was none. In relation to the member for Maroochydore's contribution, she has her maths wrong again; in fact, 26 employees of Sibelco were made redundant, not 150. She has the numbers wrong again. I absolutely oppose this motion. These fares will mean better facilities for tourists, better access for our four-wheel drivers and better camping facilities for our families. For our families travelling once a year, it will cost less than \$5.