




Speech By
Colin Boyce

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

BIODISCOVERY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr BOYCE** (Callide—LNP) (3.01 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I oppose this bill in its entirety. I do this on behalf of the mining and resource industries, the grazing and farming industries and everybody associated with them. The Callide electorate in this COVID-19 era is the economic engine room of Queensland. We produce the food you eat. We grow the fibre to put clothes on your back. We supply the materials you build your homes with. We generate the power that your affluent city lifestyles use. We provide jobs for countless thousands. We provide the revenue that pays Public Service wages. I will not see this capability compromised.

The proposal to install a Rehabilitation Commissioner seems logical and reasonable at face value. The virtue-signalling, urban environmentalist would agree with it. However, when you dig down into the substance of this proposal its intent is entirely different. The mining and resource sector already implements and practices world's best rehabilitation and environmental standards that are second to none. To overlay another level of bureaucracy is totally unwarranted, as Mr Ian Macfarlane from the Queensland Resources Council has pointed out.

The committee report says that the Rehabilitation Commissioner will be appointed upon recommendation by the minister, the commissioner will take direction from the minister and there are no specific qualifications necessary. This will be at a cost of millions to the taxpayer. This clause is absolutely toxic, in my opinion. It affords the minister, especially someone who may well be given to extremes of ideology, an opportunity to effectively weaponise any and all directions that are given to the Rehabilitation Commissioner. Effectively, the Rehabilitation Commissioner may become a political hitman for a government of the day. This is especially relevant where the current government is captive of a cabinet with ideological and political leanings overwhelming favouring extreme green eco Marxist ideology and, by default, a stand of anti agriculture, anti resources, anti development and, therefore, anti employment and, so, anti prosperity.

Queensland suffers from a bloated and somewhat inefficient Public Service. The Labor government wants to create another department. The Rehabilitation Commissioner will not be a standalone independent position; rather it will become driven by ideological politics and bigoted environmental opinion that will be championed by the uncompromising member for Algeester, Leeanne Enoch. We have seen actions in this 56th Parliament such as the appalling way the minister handled the Carmichael mine project. Make no mistake: the minister is intent on making the mining and resource sector that much harder and restrict and stifle its growth and prosperity. Who can forget the day that Jackie Trad, the member for South Brisbane, stood in this House and said coalminers must reskill?

Ms TRAD: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member is actually taking it out of context. It is personally offensive. I ask him to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): The member for South Brisbane finds it offensive. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr BOYCE: I withdraw. To attach agriculture to this bill, in particular requirements for an environmental authority for cropping and horticultural activities, is nothing short of appalling. The report notes the bill will align application requirements for an environmental authority for cropping and horticulture activities with matters to be considered when making a decision to grant an environmental authority. Put simply, farmers will now face the prospect of having to lodge applications to a government department to plant their crops. This is disgraceful. Farmers will be reduced to a tick-the-box state government department system of yes or no.

The bill clarifies existing provisions for the improved implementation of the Great Barrier Reef protection regulations. Recently I attended the federal Senate inquiry into reef science. I was the only member of this House to do so. The revelations from that inquiry are astounding. Senator Rennick asked Dr Hardisty from the Australian Institute of Marine Science, 'Is there an overall database of coral growth rates or declines for the entire Great Barrier Reef?' Dr Hardisty's answer was, 'An entire database of growth rates for the Great Barrier Reef as a whole, no such thing exists.' Dr Hardisty said, 'We have never connected them to anything to do with farm run-off or farm activity.'

The 2017 Scientific Consensus Statement for the reef, which underpins the reef legislation, states—

Sugarcane areas are the largest contributors of dissolved inorganic nitrogen and pesticides, while grazing contributes to the largest proportion of sediment and particulate nutrients to the Great Barrier Reef.

This is in total conflict to what Dr Hardisty has said and, in my opinion, is misleading and deceitful. The whole reef legislation and the bill implementing government controlled agriculture must, even to the casual observer, offer spine-chilling similarities to Stalinist Russia's disastrous state controlled collective farm system that notably created mass starvation and resulted in the death of millions. For AgForce and the Queensland Farmers' Federation to support this bill defies logic. In my opinion, they are either complicit or showed wilful negligence when examining this bill. It is little wonder their membership has failed. On behalf of the Callide farmers, graziers and miners, I do not support this bill.