



Speech By
David Crisafulli

MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (GREAT BARRIER REEF PROTECTION MEASURES) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT ACT, PROCLAMATION

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (GREAT BARRIER REEF PROTECTION MEASURES) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT REGULATION

Disallowance of Statutory Instruments (Cognate Debate)



Mr CRISAFULLI (Broadwater—LNP) (5.34 pm): I move—

That the proclamation made under the Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2019, Subordinate Legislation No. 233 of 2019, tabled in the House on 26 November 2019, be disallowed.

That the Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2019, Subordinate Legislation No. 234 of 2019, tabled in the House on 26 November 2019, be disallowed.

I start by declaring that my wife and I own two very small farms. Whilst both are leased and therefore this impact is very small, I feel it appropriate to declare that. I feel it also appropriate that it gives me an insight into the industries that we are discussing here this evening, and the towns that rely on them and rely on all that is magnificent about the reef and all that is magnificent about the farming communities that make up that area.

It would be wrong of me not to start my contribution on the amendments that the LNP first put forward when we were debating this many months ago. We did wish for it to be debated in the north and we did not get that opportunity. When it was eventually debated, there were three things the LNP put forward. I struggle to find in those three things how we could not have found common ground in this place. We could have found common ground which would have benefited the reef and would have benefited the farming community.

What were they? One was about removing the ability to just demand data. I fail to see how creating a situation where you pit farmer against consultant, farmer against supplier, can lead to a better outcome. That in fact will lead to behaviour that, in my mind, will run contrary to what we are trying to achieve.

Secondly, we were seeking a 10-year grace period for the ERA activities in the Burnett Mary catchment. The member for Burnett will be making a contribution on that shortly. That area was told that it would not be subject to these provisions at the commencement of this process many years ago. In good faith, the industry will move on that journey, but they were asking for a period of grace to be able to adapt the practices that many others have.

The third thing, and the one that I will die in a ditch over, was that the LNP wanted to stop power being handed to Brisbane bureaucrats to change farming standards. Under the amendment, standards would have been regulated and have parliamentary oversight. How can anyone in this place dispute the desire for this parliament to make the decisions on the standards we want to set for our agricultural

industries, rather than hand it to an unelected person who has never been, more than likely, in any of the industries reliant on these catchments and who has probably never made a living in the tourism sector, in the hospitality sector or the agricultural sector?

When those opposite begin to throw the barbs and say that we on this side of the House hate Nemo, because that is coming—every time we talk about this, that is coming—I want them to tell me why on earth this place would want to hand over power to that building across the road.

There are 93 people who come into this place. We all have different opinions, we have different life skills, we view the world differently, but we have one common objective and that is to ensure that the people we represent are heard. We might disagree on how to do that, but I will back the views of people who are accountable to their electorate over an unelected person every day of the week.

I have seen firsthand the evolution of the farming sector. It is not perfect, but it has come a long way. Under programs like the BMP—and I will acknowledge the former environment minister Andrew Powell who was very passionate about that—there was major progress made. If the minister and the government believe that the progress is not quick enough, resource it, set the standards, put it in legislation, work with the industries and give them a target. To somehow suggest that you will just hand over power to an unelected person who can change those settings at the click of a finger is wrong.

We have heard a lot in recent times about six easy steps—a process that the farming community has embraced. Some people say it is too stringent and others say there should be more done, but it is a target. If the government wants to come in and say that we in this place need to make stronger laws then they should put the laws on the table. Let us have a debate about it.

We cannot hand over power and we cannot hand over a blank cheque. That is what this does. That is why we are moving this disallowance motion tonight. There will be those opposite who will mischievously attempt to use this debate to say that the LNP does not support tough laws for the reef. I will push back on that. What we are doing here tonight is asking the government to have another crack and put forward sensible laws that balance the best environmental outcomes with sustainable agriculture. I do not think that is too much to ask.

The government will seek to paint the LNP as being disinterested in the environment so I will attempt to give the government a history lesson on some of that.

Ms Boyd: Oh, please.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Watch for a publication shortly, member for Pine Rivers, that will show the difference between a side of politics that believes in genuine environmental outcomes versus a side of politics that believes in tokenism and virtue signalling. It can make people feel good, but, in the end, the things we are responsible for are practical and real. I speak of things like banning the oil and gas operation on the Great Barrier Reef and deeming the reef to be of World Heritage standard—

Mr Millar: Who did that?

Mr CRISAFULLI: That was an LNP government. The world's largest marine park attaining World Heritage listing and new international standards in marine conservation by expanding the marine park's no-take sanctuary areas more than sixfold were undertaken by an LNP government. The last LNP government introduced the toughest laws ever to protect the reef. The increasing of fines for serious environmental harm to the reef of over \$3.5 million or five years in jail was done by an LNP government. Some \$35 million each year was allocated to improve water quality, including support for graziers—not vilification; not hanging them out to dry, but supporting them—and canefarmers to adopt best farm practice management and adopting healthy reef friendly practices. More work needs to be done. That is the way to work with people.

The LNP undertook an assessment of the Great Barrier Reef coastal zone—the largest ever strategic assessment undertaken for a natural system. An LNP government developed the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan guiding the protection and management of the reef for the next 35 years. An LNP government established the Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership to ensure open, honest and accountable management of the harbour and put \$4 million towards this partnership. An LNP government released a Queensland ports strategy restricting port development to the major long-established ports of Abbot Point, Gladstone, Hay Point in Mackay and Townsville as recommended by UNESCO.

An LNP government announced the Abbot Point port and wetlands strategy—a long-term plan for the development at the Abbot Point port that will see dredge material disposed of on land rather than at sea and nearby wetlands preserved and enhanced. An LNP government restricted capital dredging in the marine park and restricted it to land disposal. An LNP government invested \$9 million to

implement a buyout of the east coast net fishery which provided conservation benefits and improved the profitability of the fishery and invested \$1 million to help control the crown-of-thorns starfish. There will be more of that to come in the future.

I go back to my first point and make it strongly. Tonight every time one of those opposite attempts to make this about being anti reef or about the farmers whom they seek to vilify and say do the wrong thing, I ask everybody in the House to push back. If this were a debate about what the standards are and if we knew what the levels in the legislation were then we could have a proper debate and the barbs could then fly. If those opposite do not support what we are seeking to do tonight then it is an abrogation of their responsibility. We are seeking to disallow the provisions. We are not saying to the minister that she cannot have another crack, but if she believes a great balance can be found then put her name to it.

Mr Millar interjected.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I will take that interjection from a member of parliament who represents an area where the farm sector does a mighty job. I have not seen too many farmers, particularly in modern times, who are not well and truly aware of their role as environmental stewards. I have seen what it means to these communities. I can tell members that to sacrifice them at the altar of green ideology is wrong. These communities live and die on these industries. They need a viable farming sector just as they need a viable tourism sector. We do not have to choose one or the other. They are both possible with the right spirit of intent.

I will tell members one thing: those communities will come on the journey with the government if it sets the standards, having worked with all conservationists, with all farmers and with all those communities that live and die on the right balance. If it is placed in legislation and decided on by people in this House then it will be far more respected than what we are doing this evening. If we do not disallow this we are handing over a blank cheque to preserve the reef for the future and preserve the agricultural industries that we rely on. I am confident that with the right legislation that balance can be found.