



Speech By  
**James Lister**


**MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS**

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Record of Proceedings, 11 August 2020

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

### **BIODISCOVERY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (4.02 pm): I rise to speak on the cognate debate before us on the biodiscovery bill and the environmental protection bill. I am on the record in this House on many occasions complaining about the legislative process of the government. Whilst this is not an omnibus bill with dozens of acts implicated, it does bring together two entirely distinct bills and is another indication of how disorganised the government is and how it does not have any respect for the processes and liberties of this chamber.

I am also on record as saying on many occasions in this House that this government has a poor record for consultation. It has a proclivity to decide behind closed doors with its favourites what it wants to do and then ride roughshod over the committee process and the parliament by guillotining all the bills—as this one I am sure was subject to as well. We have seen in this particular instance severe implications potentially for the mining industry which have not been adequately ventilated.

We saw in the committee process the traditionally frank contribution by the Queensland Resources Council. They gave a pretty poor scorecard to the government for the way they have handled consultation on this bill, among many others. We heard Ian Macfarlane say that they were initially given four days in which to make a contribution to the committee on this bill and they were able to bargain that up to six days. Considering the wide implications of this bill—according to the Queensland Resources Council, which ought to know—that was not adequate consultation. In fact, they were quite scathing in their appearance before the committee and also in their written contribution.

We are talking about a process which has given us the bill, but we do not have all of the accompanying instruments and details so our consideration in this House is incomplete at best. If we do not have the residual risk assessment guidelines, how can we make a true assessment of what this bill truly means? That is another thing which was said by the Queensland Resources Council, which represents a great number of employers and communities in this state.

It reminds me of other bills where we have seen the bill come forward and the regulations are going to follow later, such as the vegetation management bill. I see my friend the honourable member for Gympie nodding knowingly. We were told that we would see the vegetation codes in due course. We are obviously seeing the same sort of thing with this particular bill. It begs the question: why would that be? Is the department wholly incapable of managing two activities at once? I tend to think it is an opportunity to escape scrutiny, knowing there is an election coming up, and to conceal from us in this House and therefore the general public in Queensland the true implications of this bill.

We also heard the government defence that there was no need for a regulatory impact statement associated with this bill. When a peak body like the Queensland Resources Council are saying that there are a great number of resource implications for them in how they are going to respond to this, that

is really a damning situation. A number of speakers before me have referred to the fact that the department, in providing a briefing to the committee contended that details associated with questions on the regulatory impacts were contained in the explanatory notes. Given that the explanatory notes would have been compiled by the department, they ought to have known that that was not the case. That is yet another failure in process which leads us to quite conclusively suspect that this is being steamrolled through for the benefit of the government and its favourites.

In terms of consultation, we heard an extraordinary revelation by Mr Macfarlane from the Queensland Resources Council. He said *inter alia* that his industry has a lot at stake here. Those who are responsible for the land in question have millions and millions of dollars at stake in terms of how these things are applied. Not having adequate consultation with a group like the Queensland Resources Council—which is highly professional in its willingness to engage with governments of all persuasions—reflects no credit on the government at all.

**Ms Enoch** interjected.

**Mr LISTER:** I can hear the minister interjecting. I have to say that one of the most concerning things about this bill is the fact that we are talking about establishing the commissioner from within the environment department's staff. I am on record as saying in this House that in my opinion the environment department has become dysfunctional. It is a department that can take 114 days to approve a beekeeping permit in a national park.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr LISTER:** I am speaking about the experiences of my constituents—people who work hard to employ people and pay taxes to pay for all of us politicians, to pay for welfare, to pay for all of the services that we scrutinise in this House. I think the government ought to show a bit more respect towards the people I am referring to.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Weir): Members, under the provisions of the business program agreed to by the House, the time limit for this stage of the bill has expired. I call the minister to reply to the second reading debate.