




Speech By  
**Jennifer Howard**

**MEMBER FOR IPSWICH**

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### **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SPIT MASTER PLAN BILL**

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (2.10 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Implementation of The Spit Master Plan Bill 2019. As many members in this House have said, the Spit is considered an iconic place on the Gold Coast by lots of people in Queensland, particularly those in South-East Queensland. I do not think there is a more enthusiastic fan of the Spit than my dog, Juno, who loves going down there and playing on the beach and running around.

The Spit is a natural piece of paradise in a concrete jungle. It is a space that attracts both local residents who want to escape and unwind as well as tourists from out of town. It is home to luxury tourist resorts that welcome thousands of tourists from around the world. It hosts world-class marine tourism enterprises such as diving and surf schools, watercraft hire, whale watching, fishing and tours of the Broadwater.

The Spit also has a rich history and a strong sense of community spirit with volunteer organisations such as the 96-year-old Southport Surf Life Saving Club, the Southport Yacht Club, TS Tyalgum Navy Cadets, the Friends of Federation Walk and the Volunteer Marine Rescue. Importantly, the Spit is an environmental oasis in the city, but a world apart. This is why it is so valued by the local community and visitors.

Over 81,000 people live within five kilometres or about a 10-minute drive from the Spit. It is seen as a respite from the city where people can enjoy its natural assets. It is home to 47 terrestrial fauna species including 44 bird species and three reptile species. It fulfils all five characteristics as set out by the CSIRO in its report entitled *Future of Tourism in Queensland*. That makes it an attractive destination for domestic and international tourists in that it is considered safe and secure, clean, green, friendly and authentic, and worth it.

Nature based, authentic tourism experiences offer opportunities for growth in the Australian tourism market. In a world where we are losing so much of our natural habitat, areas that offer authentic, nature based experiences will be highly valued. It is imperative that the Spit be improved as an important community asset for future generations. The Spit Master Plan Bill proposes to fulfil that objective. We want to enhance the public realm of the Spit to create a community space for locals, improve connections to the surrounding marine environment, generate job opportunities through tourism, entertainment and recreation, and strike a balance between protecting environmental and community values, and development opportunities.

The Palaszczuk government is committing \$60 million to oversee the funding and delivery of capital works to improve the public realm of the Spit and to deliver a site release program to appropriately manage the release of development sites identified in the master plan. To help do this, the bill today streamlines the processes for granting of particular interests in land and road closures in the Spit Master Plan to accelerate the site release program and expands the Gold Coast Waterways Authority's role, scope and capabilities to enable it to deliver the capital works program.

I am speaking today in support of this bill not only because the Spit means a lot to people in Ipswich who holiday on the Gold Coast—some families for generations—but also because I know that striking the right balance between development opportunities and environmental and community values is an important one that we have to get right. In my electorate of Ipswich, rapid development of greenfield spaces for urban residential housing has left a mark on the environmental footprint of our city. Some of this development was rubber stamped by our former Ipswich City Council with little thought about the environmental or social consequences.

While population growth is a reality, we need to accept that we can do much better at managing development sustainably in line with environmental considerations and community values. People have an overwhelming need to live in urban spaces that provide parks and nature reserves that connects them to their local environment. This is so much more important for people living in brand-new housing estates where many houses fill the size of a block and trees are minimal and where public transport is poor and people commute everywhere in their cars. Poor urban planning that gives little thought to the environment and the community is what happens when councils value developers over people.

That is why I am proud to be part of a government that banned property developer donations to state and council candidates so that we could put an end to our elected representatives working in the best interests of property developers rather than the community they are meant to serve and represent. That is why I am proud to support the Spit Master Plan bill.

The master plan strikes the right balance between preserving and enhancing the Spit's unique natural heritage as well as regulating development in line with community expectations. The natural elements and underdeveloped environment of the Spit is what people love about it—locals and tourists alike. It is part of why the Gold Coast attracts millions of visitors each year. It plays a significant role in the Gold Coast's tourist economy and generates hundreds of jobs directly and indirectly.

I know that many locals on the Gold Coast are passionate about the Spit's natural and cultural heritage, and so are many nonlocals who love the Gold Coast and the Spit as a place to visit and holiday. The master plan provides a vision for the Spit which will enhance the natural realm and improve on public spaces while providing certainty for future development opportunities. I thank the Premier and Minister Cameron Dick for their work on the master plan and I commend this bill to the House.