




Speech By
Lachlan Millar

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

Record of Proceedings, 20 February 2020

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Lake Eyre Basin, Management

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (2.56 pm): My constituents in the Lake Eyre Basin, also known as the Channel Country, are extremely distressed that they have been left uninformed and unconsulted by the Labor government concerning major changes proposed for their region. Those changes include an alarming expansion of the mapped area to include the entire Georgina, Diamantina and Cooper Creek catchments. Equally alarming is the expansion of disallowed activity land uses and infrastructure constructions. Those will threaten the very sustainability of the local economy, which is beef, and therefore the viability of the Lake Eyre or Channel Country communities.

The only chance the majority of the Lake Eyre Basin people have had to learn about these drastic changes proposed by the department of environment and the Labor government has been at a series of forums held by AgForce. That wonderful part of Queensland has supported Indigenous traditional owners for a long time. Labor says that it consulted a group called the Lake Eyre Basin Traditional Owners' Alliance. Across the basin at those AgForce forums, traditional owners—the real traditional owners—have said that they have never heard of that group. They have expressed the opinion that it was a token put up to hide the fact that they were not being consulted. They said quite bluntly that the changes had been kept so quiet that they only heard about them through other worried stakeholders, such as the graziers and local businesses. It is no wonder that they feel so disrespected.

For over 150 years, the Lake Eyre Basin traditional owners have coexisted peacefully with the pastoral industries of sheep and cattle grazing. Not only are those two groups the foundation of life in the basin communities; it is their combined land management skills that have maintained the land and the waters in their current pristine state. Under the current pretence of protecting the same pristine state, Labor now threatens its existence. It is insulting.

We found that the government's entire presentation at the AgForce community forums was only six slides on a PowerPoint presentation. At no point did the presentation explain how the current act is inadequate to the task of protection, neither scientifically, environmentally, culturally or practically; nor was any evidence produced of a change in any of those domains that has created a need for change; nor was any regulatory impact assessment presented on the legal and economic issues for local industries and communities.

Given the success of over 25 years of evidence based regional planning in the Lake Eyre Basin, the current proposal seems to have been developed in wilful ignorance and reckless disregard for the welfare of the Lake Eyre Basin people or Channel Country people. As many people at the AgForce forums said, this is just Labor shoring up Green preferences for South-East Queensland's Labor seats at the expense of Western Queensland, again. Again, they are putting Western Queensland last.

(Time expired)