




Speech By  
**Rob Molhoek**

**MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT**

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Record of Proceedings, 19 February 2020

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SPIT MASTER PLAN BILL**

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (2.21 pm): I am pleased to follow the Premier on this particular piece of legislation. I note that I am still waiting for an invitation to sunset drinks at her apartment at Main Beach. Maybe one day that will occur.

**Ms Palaszczuk**: I haven't been on your jet ski!

**Mr MOLHOEK**: I take that interjection from the Premier. The offer to go for a ride on my jet ski still stands, although some of my colleagues have suggested that maybe it would be appropriate to make sure you fall off—

**Dr Miles**: Oh, that's nasty.

**Mr MOLHOEK**: No, no—just to ensure that you enjoy the full experience of an afternoon jet skiing, Premier.

**Ms Palaszczuk**: It would say more about you than me!

**Mr MOLHOEK**: I note that those on our side of the House will not be opposing this legislation. I do want to take Deputy Speaker Stevens back to 22 October 1998. I can see the look of consternation on your face because you are struggling to remember that date. That was the morning after you and I were unceremoniously dumped from our attempt to join the charges board. On that particular day that news was shared on the front page of the *Gold Coast Bulletin* with yet another crazy proposal to create some overdevelopment of the Broadwater. At that point there was a proposal being touted to build a bridge to Wave Break Island from the end of Brisbane Road and then create a marina complex on Wave Break Island.

We have heard from the member for Surfers Paradise. I note that the member for Bancroft mentioned earlier the fact that what the Gold Coast has been wanting in regard to the Spit is some certainty about its future. I, like the member for Surfers Paradise and you, Mr Deputy Speaker, and others, have been calling for a master plan for the best part of a decade, if not longer. I am pleased that at long last the Gold Coast does have some certainty around this issue, that there is a master plan and a vision that the broader community have been able to contribute to.

Like others in the House—I note that the member for Gaven shared some of her experiences on the Spit—I, too, grew up on the Gold Coast. I taught my boys to surf over on the Spit. I have spent many a weekend over there with the family. I can remember a time when there was no Spit—when there was marine land and a very unstable seaway, or the Southport bar as it was called back then. It was Keith Williams, the developer of Sea World, who had the vision to stabilise that stretch of land. He and other developers of the day planted hundreds, if not thousands, of casuarina trees on the eastern side of the Spit to stabilise it and eventually create what is one of the Gold Coast's best attractions—Sea World.

We have heard much said about developers. There are those on the other side of the House who introduce legislation to attack developers and who subtly suggest in some way that they are not worthy of getting involved in politics and the community. There are many developers in the history of the Gold

Coast who we can be extremely thankful for—for their vision, their persistence, their hard work and their personal contribution to making the Gold Coast what it is today. I would suggest to those members that, if it were not for the vision of someone like Keith Williams—who sadly passed away I think three or four years ago now—we would not have the Spit to be arguing about or discussing in this chamber.

There have been many divergent views about the future of the Spit. I have attended some very interesting ‘Save our Spit’ meetings over the last decade. If you really want to upset a room full of people, get the room to start discussing their ideas of what is an appropriate level of development and an inappropriate level of development. There are some who want the Spit left exactly as it is, as a nature reserve with no more infrastructure, no more buildings, no sound shells, no recreation areas at the end and no mounding for concerts. They want it left as it is.

I am pleased to see the progress that has been made in creating decent public amenities at the northern end of the Spit such as the new kiosk and the new public toilets. We now have a sewer that runs out to the end of the Spit to deal with those amenities. I am also pleased in creating the waterways authority, as we did under the LNP government, that we now have a very proactive approach to managing our waterways and managing the facilities and resources on the Spit.

I am pleased to hear that a new toilet block and showers will be built. That is in the current proposal. I am also pleased to hear that there are some plans for better pathways in some parts of the Spit. I am particularly pleased to note that there is also a plan to upgrade the pathway on the southern groyne. It is a beautiful spot. It enjoys a lot of foot traffic out there every day—365 days of the year. There is absolutely a need to upgrade that pathway and improve the amenity of that facility.

I am, however, a little concerned. The concern is this: the natural beauty of the Spit is something to behold. For some 10 years or more now it has been my pleasure to go for a walk up and back to the Spit most Friday mornings with a group of mates. I will lay on the table a standing invitation for anyone to join us—meet at six o’clock at the Main Beach surf club. You are welcome to join us.

**Mr Hart:** Then have drinks on the balcony.

**Mr MOLHOEK:** No, we will not be having drinks on the balcony. What I am concerned about is that we have a wonderful walkway through there called Federation Walk. I note that in the current master plan there is a suggestion that there be concrete paths from one end of the Spit to the other. I understand that we need to provide greater amenity and facilities and greater access for people, but it would concern me to see the Spit overdeveloped.

Perhaps there could be a compromise where there is a concrete path along the ocean way but a real effort to maintain the natural setting and natural pathway which is the Federation Walk. I know that many volunteers have worked hard for many years with tree plantings and maintenance programs. The amenity of the western stretches of Federation Walk really should be preserved.

I am also a little concerned about some of the proposals in respect of more infrastructure. I note that there is a proposal to create more hard standing infrastructure and retail space at the northern end of the Spit near the kiosk.

I would suggest to the House that we need to make haste slowly with some of those proposals. By all means—and I am on the record as saying this many times—let’s develop the western side of the Spit up to Sea World. I am pleased to see the approach that has been adopted there, but we do not want to see the northern end of the Spit, Doug Jennings Park and parts of the eastern side of the Spit overdeveloped. It is very important that we take great care and that there be a lot more thought and consideration around the extent and style of development proposed for any of the eastern stretches of the Spit.

I said earlier that we will not be opposing this bill. I am pleased that we finally have a master plan for the Spit. At least now the community has the certainty it has sought from us and other levels of government over many years. In the Beattie and Bligh years we saw this great community asset kicked around many times. Sadly, we saw some proposals through our term in government as well. There were suggestions that tunnels be built at a cost of billions of dollars and that Wave Break Island be turned into some sort of tourist resort. These are areas that we will never get back. As the member for Southport, I am proud to stand in this House to speak for my community and say that I am pleased the Spit and those natural spaces will be preserved for future generations to come.