




Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

Record of Proceedings, 12 October 2021

RESOURCES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (4.25 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I would like to thank the members of the committee and the staff for their consideration of this omnibus bill. We know that they are synonymous with the Department of Natural Resources.

The bill amends the mineral resources and petroleum acts and repeals the Personalised Transport Ombudsman Act. It also ensures water restrictions can be equitably investigated and enforced across the South-East Queensland region, by amending the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act to align with the powers local government water service providers have under the local government legislation. The bill also amends the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act to exclude the requirements for water service providers to make publicly available highly sensitive cybersecurity information and reporting metrics. We are advised this is to ensure Queensland's water service providers' vulnerability will be reduced when it comes to malicious cyber attacks on communities' water supplies.

The bill amends both the mineral resources and petroleum acts. The minister advised the House this will give certainty to industry and community stakeholders by clarifying the validity of certain historically granted tenures and the standing of existing applications. The proposed amendments are, by necessity, retrospective in effect. We were also advised by the minister that the amendments to the Petroleum Act 1923 are to clarify the standing and validity of applications to renew production leases under the Petroleum Act where the decision to renew is made after the term of the lease has expired. These amendments will also apply retrospectively. We are advised that this is necessary to remove any doubt that the leases renewed before the commencement of the proposed amendments were validity renewed, even if they were decided after the expiry date of the lease. We have amendments in this bill that give certainty to industry and community stakeholders and are also retrospective.

This is a far cry from the situation that is occurring with petroleum activity on priority agricultural area lands. I particularly want to mention those in the Kupunn district near Dalby who are dealing with petroleum activity. Community stakeholders like Bev Newton are not feeling that certainty when it comes to petroleum activity. Mrs Newton advises that at the present time they are being under drilled for petroleum from a neighbouring property without any assessment being done as to the impact directional wells will have on their farm business. The Department of Resources claims it does not deem it to be preliminary or advanced and that each case needs to be judged on a case by case basis. This is not occurring and Mrs Newton advised that no-one is policing the situation.

We heard earlier in the debate on the bill the minister talk about addressing administrative deficiencies. There are certainly some deficiencies when it comes to the petroleum activity as Mrs Newton has described. She also advises they already have one landholder who has suffered subsidence that has caused economic loss to farming land. This landholder also has ring tank infrastructure that is directional drilled well under the ring tank and is now suffering water loss through seepage at a much greater rate than normal evaporation.

The manner in which this Labor government is administering its responsibilities in the Kupunn district and where these petroleum activities are occurring is not giving certainty or confidence to community stakeholders such as Mrs Newton and other landholders. Mrs Newton advises that coal seam gas development across the flat flood plain has never been done before and that the resource activities in the Kupunn district are experimental. She is concerned that the subsidence issues across the flood plain will not be able to be rectified in the future.

This flood plain has some of the best of the best agricultural cropping land in Queensland. The current legislative profile is deficient when it comes to adequate protections for the Condamine alluvium and this cropping land from petroleum resource development. Mrs Newton states that the company Arrow Energy should have been made to do a regional impact development approval for this irreplaceable priority agricultural area land. She is disappointed that yet again the state Labor government has let Arrow self-assess the situation.

She also states that landholders with no conduct and compensation agreement have no negotiating rights, no access to Land Ombudsman services, no ability to recoup legal or professional costs and no ability to force Arrow to go through the regional impact development approval. The deviated wells agreement being proposed will not fulfil all of those requirements. A conduct and compensation agreement with landholders negotiating and signing an agreement at least allows the impacted landholder input.

These are the relevant issues at present that the Labor government should be taking charge of. The government has the motivation in this bill to provide certainty to industry and community stakeholders through retrospective legislation. I ask: when will the government provide certainty to the landholders in the Kupunn district by addressing these deficiencies in legislation? These deficiencies place the tenure holder in conflict with the landholders and create uncertainty for the future of their agricultural businesses and the tenure holder.