




Speech By  
**Charis Mullen**

**MEMBER FOR JORDAN**

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Record of Proceedings, 13 May 2021

**NATURE CONSERVATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION (INDIGENOUS JOINT MANAGEMENT—MORETON ISLAND) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (12.03 pm): I am pleased to be able to make a contribution to the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation (Indigenous Joint Management—Moreton Island) Amendment Bill 2020. I was very fortunate to be on the former State Development, Tourism, Innovation and Manufacturing Committee that originally considered this legislation and provided a report. Whilst COVID-19 impacted our inquiry at the time, we were able to hold a public hearing at the Redlands Performing Arts Centre where we heard from a number of key stakeholders. The member for Oodgeroo and I along with secretariat staff also visited Moreton Island, or Mulgumpin as it is known to the Quandamooka people. Despite its proximity to Brisbane, I must confess that this was only the second time that I had visited the island and it is truly a most beautiful island. The Federal Court's consent determination in 2019 rightly recognises the native title rights of the Quandamooka people over Mulgumpin.

It is important to appreciate the natural and cultural significance of this wonderful island, its outstanding natural features and unique archaeological importance but also what an important and valuable recreation area it is for many visitors. The bill before us seeks to provide the legal framework that recognises the native title determination which is enshrined in the ILUA, the Indigenous land use agreement, and how this will be delivered practically through the joint management of the protected areas on Mulgumpin. This includes amendments to a number of acts, including the Aboriginal Land Act 1991, the Nature Conservation Act 1992 and the Recreation Areas Management Act 2006.

During the public hearing that the former committee conducted there were a number of concerns raised regarding the confidential nature of both the ILUA and the Indigenous management agreement. Appreciating the complex and sensitive nature of negotiations that have occurred, the minister, I believe, has provided a level of confidence that the ILUA has been delivered within an appropriate framework of corporate governance, internal control mechanisms and suitable reporting. Many of the concerns raised were from existing commercial activity permit holders on the island. Whilst it was acknowledged that there is a lot of opportunity for collaboration for enhanced cultural tourism on the island with the Quandamooka people through QYAC, there were calls at the time for more information around the joint management arrangements. This is something which the former committee acknowledged through a specific recommendation to provide further consultation opportunities. This was also confirmed by the State Development and Regional Industries Committee through a number of recommendations in its final report, which the government has considered.

Firstly, there was a recommendation that provides consideration for training, education and professional development mechanisms for stakeholders on native title processes. As the minister outlined in her speech, the Department of Resources and the Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships do provide a range of resources and information about cultural heritage management, native title processes and legislation requirements. Secondly, the committee recommended that the Department of Environment and Science support the statutory

consultation requirements with some additional consultation on the draft management plan. I am pleased that the government has confirmed its support for this recommendation and acknowledged that greater transparency and input into the new management plan will be positive for the Quandamooka people, the local residents and businesses on the island.

During my visit to Mulgumpin I had the wonderful opportunity to meet with representatives of QYAC and some of the local Indigenous rangers who work for QYAC, and I was very grateful for this opportunity. It was important to better understand the work they are currently undertaking but also their future roles under the new joint management arrangements. I certainly sensed a real pride in how they were looking after their land in a culturally appropriate way.

I am also pleased that our government has provided funds that will support six new QYAC positions as well as a number of community rangers who will work on a project basis. Whilst on the island, we also visited the existing ranger facilities and spoke with our QPWS rangers, who provided us with their insights on Mulgumpin. I wish to thank them for the work they do on the island.

I was again pleased to see that our government is also investing in a new ranger base, workshops and ranger accommodations which will better support those who are working diligently to manage this beautiful island. I do also wish to thank the QPWS rangers who looked after us as we trekked across the island. It was certainly a very bumpy ride at times, but we saw many of the existing camping grounds and had a spectacular stop and lunch break under the impressive Cape Moreton Lighthouse, which is a memory I will always cherish.

Another issue raised by the tourism operators related to the commercial activity permits and whether they would be reissued. As the minister has advised the House, existing commercial activity permit holders have had their permits reissued. It is good to hear that a new tourism operator has been approved by the department and QYAC to provide glamping accommodation, which I must say is the only camping I like these days. This of course will increase the offering on the island for those who wish to experience the incredible natural environment on Mulgumpin, albeit more comfortably. The diversity of offering, whether it is camping, glamping, staying in private accommodation or at the famous Tangalooma resort or just day tripping, will really make Mulgumpin an even more popular destination for domestic tourists and for international tourists when they hopefully return in the future.

I also thank Jeff Osborne, from Tangalooma resort, who met with me and the secretariat on the island. As expected, at the time of our meeting it was a difficult time for the resort, with COVID-19 heavily impacting its operations. Jeff offered us a ride back to the mainland on one of their boats. I really appreciated the frank discussion but also the willingness to look at the opportunities that can arise from the new joint management arrangements on Mulgumpin. I hope there are employment and training opportunities and collaboration with QYAC on cultural experiences. I think this would be of great benefit to all parties.

We are at an important point of Mulgumpin's history and future. The island is well known and much loved, and the rightful return of land on Mulgumpin to the Quandamooka people is important and has the potential to provide even more tourism, cultural and nature based activities whilst also providing more economic opportunities for the Quandamooka people. With the additional commitments to consultation and the investment being made by the Palaszczuk government, I am very hopeful that the future of Mulgumpin is bright. I commend the bill to the House.