




Speech By  
**Hon. Craig Crawford**

**MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER**

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Record of Proceedings, 13 May 2021

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

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (11.52 am): I rise to support the bill. As we know, in 2019 the Federal Court of Australia made a native title consent determination that recognises the Quandamooka people's ongoing native title rights and interests on Moreton Island, or Mulgumpin as it is known to the Quandamooka people. It is important to understand that, while native title has not delivered all that First Nations people had hoped for, it does formally recognise their status as the first peoples in Australia. It does recognise their more than 60,000 years of connection to country and the contribution they have made to caring for this country that we enjoy today. And it does ensure that their rights and interests are recognised formally in the legal fabric of our now shared nation.

The Mulgumpin native title determination included an Indigenous land use agreement and an Indigenous management agreement that supports the return of Quandamooka lands to Quandamooka people as Aboriginal land held in trust by the Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation, or QYAC. Both the state and QYAC are parties to these agreements and have a range of responsibilities under them. QYAC is the community nominated, legally recognised body that holds the determined native title rights and interests on behalf of the Quandamooka peoples. The determination also includes protected areas that will be jointly managed by Quandamooka people and the state.

In order to support the delivery of our native title determination obligations, a number of legislative amendments are required. Before these lands can be granted as Aboriginal land to QYAC, they must first be identified as transferable land under the Aboriginal Land Act 1991. This bill makes the necessary amendments to the Aboriginal Land Act to ensure prescribed protected areas on Mulgumpin are transferable land and able to be formally returned back to the Quandamooka people. There are also amendments to the Nature Conservation Act and the Recreation Areas Management Act to support consistency across the legislation around joint management of the protected areas.

The bill will ensure that consultation requirements are met with QYAC and with other stakeholders who have an interest in Moreton Island. We all understand the opportunities that Moreton Island brings through tourism, and the amendments in this bill ensure that the island's tourism industry will continue to be an important industry on Mulgumpin. It responds to the scaremongering delivered by the media and those opposite who encourage division and conflict.

Questions have been raised about the confidential nature of Indigenous land use agreements. These agreements are the business of the Quandamooka people. Just like others are afforded commercial-in-confidence status, the Quandamooka people have that right under native title. Governments have controlled every aspect of Indigenous people's lives since colonisation. We are committed to a future that no longer does this.

I wish to recognise one of the oldest remaining elders of Mulgumpin. Mr Bob Anderson is 91 years of age. He is in the chamber today and he was in the chamber yesterday to observe the second reading debate on this bill. I want to recognise his contribution, his leadership and his passion for sitting

here for two days listening to us debate this bill—and his attendance is certainly worth that recognition. This reform is not just about legislation and amendments and policies and process. It is about the lives, the legacy and the future of the Quandamooka people. Having Mr Anderson here demonstrates the importance of these types of legislative reforms to Aboriginal people. His presence here demonstrates the ongoing role he plays as an elder of his people to ensure the generations coming through have a future worth looking forward to. It demonstrates that the responsibility to land, country and culture is still very much alive and well and taken very seriously by the Aboriginal people and Aboriginal elders.

As we progress along the path towards treaty, it is these types of reforms that help to undo the impacts of colonisation, that create the space for those impacted so heavily to begin to heal and for Aboriginal people to take back their rightful place on their lands and waters. Mr Anderson explains this in his book documenting his life journey called *History, Life and Times of Robert Anderson*. He says—

The vision of my country, the way I view or see my country, the way I talk or sing up my country, the way I talk of the stories of my country and talk about my Elders and Ancestors, this is my cultural heritage.

...

To be with my family and community people walking the country together, making that strong spiritual connection with the land is my cultural heritage.

...

If we do not have access to our land, we are denied the right to maintain our practices that protect, preserve and nurture our land and our cultural heritage.

The changes in this bill mean that Quandamooka people are no longer denied that right to maintain practices that protect, preserve and nurture their land and their cultural heritage. It means we no longer repeat Queensland's history of imposing government policy that further inflicts trauma and grief on families and a breakdown of spiritual and cultural links to traditional land. This bill does more than just change the title of land; it is about establishing a new path for healing, recognition and opportunity that is deserved by the descendants of families subjected to historical injustice over many generations. This bill is a demonstration to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that this is a government that is serious about facing our shared past and reconciling for a better future.

We know that the creeks, lagoons, rocky headlands, abundant wildflowers, tall sand dunes and miles of sandy beaches that make up Mulgumpin offer Queenslanders a special place to take their families. Joint management between Queensland parks and wildlife and QYAC will mean greater self-determination and protection of its natural habitat. Through restoring and protecting the cultural and environmental values of Quandamooka people, the spirit of Mulgumpin can be preserved for the enjoyment of future generations—not just of the Quandamooka peoples but for all Queenslanders. I commend this bill to the House.