




Speech By  
**Jessica Pugh**

**MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY**

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Record of Proceedings, 13 May 2021

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

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (12.39 pm): I am incredibly proud to be part of a team that has three First Nations people as members of our caucus. It is also wonderful to see the number of people who are speaking on the bill before us today. Of course, I rise to support the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation (Indigenous Joint Management—Moreton Island) Amendment Bill. We have heard from the member for Bundamba about some of the benefits of joint management. This bill amends the Nature Conservation Act to identify Moreton Island as a place where prescribed protected areas can be declared an Indigenous joint management area. Once the land has been granted to a trustee under the Aboriginal Land Act, Governor in Council approval can be sought to declare an Indigenous joint management area over the lands to formalise joint management between QYAC and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.

The protected areas on Mulgumpin have been managed by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service since the first national park was declared on the island in 1966. However, there was no legal capacity to enter into formal joint management arrangements with the First Nations people of the land. Outcomes negotiated for the recent native title determination over Mulgumpin provide an opportunity to formally partner with the Quandamooka people to enhance the island's natural and cultural resources and values through joint management. That joint management will facilitate greater self-determination and protect and promote the cultural rights of the Quandamooka people.

The cultural rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are outlined in section 28 of the Human Rights Act 2019. Cultural rights relevant to the amendments in this bill are: the right to enjoy, maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage; the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct spiritual, material and economic relationship with the land and other resources that they have a connection with under Aboriginal tradition; and the right to conserve and protect the environment and productive capacity of the land and other resources.

Amendments will allow an Indigenous joint management area to be declared over prescribed protected areas on Mulgumpin. This will allow the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and QYAC to work together to protect the significant cultural and environmental values of the island so they can be enjoyed today and continue to be preserved for generations to come for all of Queensland and, indeed, the world to enjoy.

Mulgumpin is a popular tourist destination enjoyed by many Queenslanders as well as interstate visitors and, I would argue, visitors from throughout the world. Before COVID-19 it was indeed a bit of a hotspot. On average, during each of the past three years over 23,000 camping and vehicle permits were issued to people visiting Mulgumpin. Other than the camping and vehicle access permits now being issued by a new QYAC business called Mulgumpin Camping, joint management will not change permitting arrangements for visitors. Self-reliant visitors will continue to enjoy camping, four-wheel driving, fishing and other opportunities for recreation on Mulgumpin. A range of commercial tours will continue to be offered by a number of different operators for people wishing to do a day trip to the island

or for—hopefully—people staying for a longer holiday and wanting to experience the benefits of a commercial tour of Mulgumpin. Visitors will also continue to have access to private accommodation or holiday homes and will have opportunities to book integrated accommodation and tour packages with tourism businesses.

Joint management will allow traditional Aboriginal knowledge to be incorporated into joint management activities and decision-making related to the protected areas on Mulgumpin to enhance the natural and cultural values of the area for the benefit of all Queenslanders. The amendments in the bill are also expected to lead to increased opportunities for the economic, social and cultural aspirations of the Quandamooka people to be achieved. As I said earlier, joint management will benefit all Queenslanders. The high conservation values of Mulgumpin will continue to be protected and it is anticipated that for tourists an enhanced presentation of the cultural values of Mulgumpin will become an intrinsic part of visiting the island.

Joint management increases cultural awareness of the significant connection First Nations people have to their country and the important role they continue to play in the management of country. We know tourists are interested to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture in the places that they visit. Joint management will provide opportunities to enhance visitor experiences through the showcasing of Aboriginal history and culture by First Nations people from the area. The Quandamooka people will have the capacity to enhance and provide new cultural tourism experiences. Joint management will also allow the Quandamooka people to support existing tourism operators by providing their customers with access to and an increased understanding of the unique Quandamooka cultural history.

Joint management has been operating effectively for 28 national parks in Cape York. The Cape York Peninsula region has continued to grow as a tourism destination. As an example, tourism entities and the Olkola people of Cape York have worked together to provide visitors with an authentic tourism experience guided by First Nations people. By working in partnership with the Quandamooka people, new tourism opportunities can be provided for people to enjoy and learn about the history and the culture of Quandamooka people on Mulgumpin.

When it comes to Mulgumpin, we know that most of the island has been included in the internationally recognised Moreton Bay Ramsar site in recognition of its beautiful and important wetlands sites that include salt marshes, tidal flats, sandy beaches and perched lakes. Although it is some distance from my electorate, I am often contacted about those wetland areas. I know that they are important to all of Queensland. Those protected areas are also part of the Moreton Island Recreation Area, which was declared under the Recreation Areas Management Act 2006. As I have said, the first national park was created on Mulgumpin in 1966 and has grown significantly in size as more areas have been progressively added to the national park over time in recognition of the outstanding natural and cultural values of the island.

The proposed joint management arrangements will be similar to the arrangements in place with QYAC within the Indigenous joint management area on Minjerribah. As I have said, joint management increases the Quandamooka people's opportunities to become involved in the overall planning of and operations for the prescribed protected areas on Mulgumpin. For example, QYAC has established a business called Mulgumpin Camping that will generate opportunities in tourism, leading to more local employment opportunities and a generation of revenue. It is a really exciting opportunity.

I have very fond memories of camping on nearby Minjerribah as a school student. A lot of people from the south-east corner would have gone through that camp over the years. It was absolutely fantastic. The camp was run in partnership with the First Nations people. We enjoyed some wonderful activities on grade 6 camp, if I am not mistaken, when I was at Bulimba State School.

It is wonderful to see this evolution because, as I have said, this part of the world is really treasured. It is a bit of a hidden secret. We are very lucky to have some of the best beaches right on our doorstep. We are incredibly lucky to have the opportunity to visit the island. It is an absolute treasure. Therefore, I finish my contribution by thanking the First Nations people for their continued custodianship of the lands on which we gather today and the lands of Mulgumpin which they have cared for so beautifully, making them the iconic destination that they are today. Every morning in this place we say how lucky we are to have 60,000-odd years of continued custodianship of the land and the oldest living culture in the world. That is an amazing thing and we are so lucky to be the beneficiaries of it. I wholeheartedly commend this bill to the House and I look forward to it receiving bipartisan support.