




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR TRAEGER

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

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (3.21 pm): I rise to speak on the nature conservation bill as a member of the committee. This was a subject I did not know too much about, but I was able to be pretty well educated throughout the process as we went to Moreton Island. From the outset I would say it is probably good intent but bad legislation; it has been badly orchestrated. That is certainly the strong view I formed from my observations throughout that process. That really concerns me because I think some of the intents just expressed by the member for Ipswich West were very virtuous and true. I think everyone would like to see an outcome where the Quandamooka people could form cultural tours, enhance the cultural experience and play a role in improving the environmental conditions there. That would be a wonderful outcome on a number of levels.

However, it became strongly apparent to me from the information we were given that this is a bad way to do it. The reasons I say that have nothing to do with the Quandamooka people. The representatives we met were very engaging, very reasonable and seemed intent on working effectively and participating in those activities on the island. The big question I have relates to the tourism operators. We met locals including home owners, but I focus on the tourism operators because, as most people acknowledge, there are small parcels of freehold and leasehold tenure and outside of that it is all national park.

Most of the tourism businesses rely on the activities on the national park for their business to be viable. One of those businesses uses a \$20 million catamaran as an adjunct to their business of quad bikes and tours. If a business is seeking \$20 million from a bank they will want to know about the business's viability for at least a 10-year projection. The bank would ask, 'Where is the lease for the land that you make this money off to pay off this boat and these quad bikes? Where are the agreements? How are they formed and what is their reliability?' I have to say that if I was a bank I would never lend any of these people that money. From what I am told, there is a group coming in for a joint management agreement with the national parks—

Mr Nicholls: So you do agree with the banks sometimes, Robbie?

Mr KATTER: I say to the member for Clayfield on the record that this may be the one time I agree with the banks. I cannot get my head around the fact that, well-meaning or not, the government can bring a group of people onto national parks with the aspiration of creating tourism businesses on the island. I hope that is what they will do. If so, they are going to be involved in the judgement call of what happens with their lease on the national park which will impact on their business. If that is not a direct conflict of interest, I am not here. I do not see how they can get past that. Maybe there is more to be made clear to me about the process. At the time those of us on the committee were examining this, it was made patently clear that there was no more information or no better picture to be drawn. There is all this uncertainty going forward for the businesses on the lease, which creates tension and animosity. Then it becomes unmanageable and everybody loses out.

As I said at the start, there might be some good intent and we might share the same view of where this should land, but I cannot see that this is good legislation to take us from point A to point B. There cannot be a scenario where there is not a conflict unless the party is completely removed from that process, and those businesses critically rely on access to those areas.

It could be that for the near future they are provided full access, some access or restricted access. However, if a business is trying to loan \$20 million for a catamaran, the bank will want to know the viability of that business and their ability to repay it. I would say their chances of remaining viable are very, very low. That would indicate to me that those businesses will have a short future unless that is addressed, in which case there will be a diminution of those businesses and that does not benefit anyone. I do not think that benefits the Quandamooka people at all. In fact, I think they need thriving adjunct businesses there so they can leverage off them in the future and perhaps play a major ownership role in those businesses in the future. However, just rushing into it like this is fraught with danger for any organisation—for any entity. I would not like to be doing it myself.

On that basis, I think this is very bad legislation. It is drawing a bit of a long bow, but currently in the gulf there is an organisation that has been taking over Adels Grove. This is what happens when you move fast on these things. It has all but shut the doors. It is overgrown and people are not booking. Previously we had 40,000 tourists visit there a year but now it is completely dysfunctional. That is what happens if you move too fast from point A to point B. You want to get to point B, but do it properly, do it thoughtfully and do it with respect for the people you are trying to help. It is no good just throwing them in the deep end in an agreement. That is why I believe this legislation will create more problems than it sets out to fix. I do have very big problems with it. I think there is good intent behind this legislation, but it has been badly executed.