




Speech By
Amanda Camm

MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

Record of Proceedings, 30 November 2023

TRANSPORT AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to take Note

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (3.27 pm): I am very pleased to contribute to the report on the inquiry into the economic and regulatory frameworks for Queensland island resorts delivered by the committee. I want to thank and commend the hard work of the committee. In particular, I want to make note of the member for Condamine, along with the member for Miller, whom I approached when I was first elected to this parliament about the issues in my local communities, starting with Keswick Island. When I was formerly deputy mayor of Mackay, I knew the challenges that they had been advocating to overcome for over many years. That became very clearly apparent during Cyclone Debbie when they were really forgotten by many. Then there was a change of ownership and what that meant for their lack of accessibility to services, to community and to the fundamentals that we have on the mainland.

I want to acknowledge the chair, the member for Kurwongbah, for the way he went about leading this committee, as well as all members of the committee. I was privileged to make a submission and give evidence to the committee. I was able to welcome them to my community. I represent 241 marine islands in the Whitsunday electorate, of which only 135 are named and 74 are situated as part of the Whitsunday Island group.

I want to pay tribute to and recognise the hard advocacy of: Julie Willis; Craig Gilbert; Greg Chappell; KIPA, the Keswick Island Progress Association; the Basil Bay Residents Association; the Whitsunday conservation group; and all of those who undertook an advocacy campaign of 'reclaim Keswick Island', which spanned across this entire nation when people came to understand the deprivation of rights that the residents on Keswick Island were experiencing—for them not to be able to land an aircraft, for them not to have access to their boat moorings, for them not to have safe access. Some of the people who have chosen to retire and invest their entire life savings into what is a little piece of paradise frankly went through hell for many years. At all levels of government—local, state and federal—there was very little interaction. What the committee uncovered in this inquiry demonstrates how this House and the committee process can work together to deliver key recommendations and the accountability those residents need. I will leave it to other members of this House to address other parts of the state.

I was formerly deputy mayor of Mackay Regional Council, which had experience of Brampton Island being granted a development extension under delegation which the council was not even aware of for an additional six years. We saw land banking by international companies, but because they are under leases and they fall under Foreign Investment Review Board thresholds, nobody showed accountability and there was very limited oversight. Today I want to acknowledge government's announcement of \$3 million for ecotourism on Hook, Long and Keswick islands in my electorate. It is desperately needed. If some of the things we saw on those islands occurred on the mainland, people would be sent to jail. They would be given notices. To see turtle nests torn up on the beaches of Keswick Island by the head lessee was heartbreaking to say the least, let alone for the residents. For many,

because it is out of sight it is out of mind, so I want to congratulate KIPA for their ongoing advocacy. I first raised issues around the head lessee which date back to the deed of agreement in 2008. Keswick Island was borne out of a planning court decision in 1994. Some of the legacy of those head lessee agreements caused enormous issues when there was no proper oversight.

I do want to acknowledge the member for Condamine and the member for Maroochydore, who travelled with the committee. We thank them for their hospitality. It was a rough ride. I did not know if the member for Maroochydore and the member for Condamine would make it. When the weather turns bad people do not understand that boats cannot return to the mainland. We were able to pull off a helicopter trip—thank goodness that, because of my islands, my electorate allowance allows that—and that was the only way we could get off the island. It demonstrated to us that anyone on that island who needed medical attention or access is very limited in what they can obtain. Once again I thank the committee and the secretariat. Some of these parts of my electorate are not considered remote and rural, but they really are remote.