




Speech By  
**James Lister**

**MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS**

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Record of Proceedings, 29 March 2023

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT  
BILL**

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (11.41 am): I, too, rise to make a contribution on the Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. Last night I was enlivened by some of the contributions by members of the government talking about respective records on environmental credibility. As members would know, I represent a country seat in which there is an enormous amount of outstanding agricultural land. Of interest to me and my constituents is how the environment is protected in the face of things such as coal seam gas. In response to something the member for Lytton said last night—words to the effect that the LNP is in bed with big business and we do not care about the environment—I remind those opposite that it was a Labor government that was involved in the Linc Energy debacle. In that part of the world—not far from my electorate—we saw very significant problems with coal seam gas extraction. The government's record at the time is not one which reflects credit upon it.

**Mr Watts** interjected.

**Mr LISTER:** I take that interjection from the member for Toowoomba North.

I turn to the process by which this bill has been considered. I acknowledge the words which have come across in many submissions I have received or seen in my committee work—on the committee I am currently on and particularly on the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee during the last term—that in some cases the government pays lip-service to consultation. We have evidence in the submissions which were tendered in consideration of this bill by the committee that when the consultation did occur it was not reflective and was quite divergent from the extent of the bill once it was finally put before the House. Considering the scope and impact of some of the measures in this bill, that is very disappointing.

We heard talk about sovereign risk. This is a serious matter. Business and investment have been made on the basis that we live in a developed democracy where law progresses through the consent of the people and that we do not have surprises and retrospective effects thrown upon us. That does not go to the government's credit, either. I say to the government on behalf of the people of Southern Downs that legislation such as this needs genuine consultation. I even hear that there were confidentiality agreements involved with some of the groups consulted with. That strikes me as being very high-handed. We have to ask: if the consultation is supposed to bring the community with you, why is it that it was necessary for the community to be prevented from seeing what this bill was going to be? I leave that with the House.

I make one more observation regarding the environmental credentials of the government, in response to what some members said last night in this House. I have posed a number of questions to the government—I hope to get answers in the coming weeks—regarding the environmental protections and checks on the extraction of coal seam gas in my neck of the woods. Why is this sort of thing not appearing in the bill? This bill would be a perfect way in which to shore up regulations and checks on holders of approvals to extract coal seam gas: to ensure that their water extraction does not exceed the

take limits they have been given under the environmental approval—that is something the state should be doing; whether or not there is protection from the pollution of groundwater, wastewater that is salty and so forth; and to ensure there will be no subsidence on the properties of the many people I represent, in the Cecil Plains area in particular. While this bill has some decent measures, the government could be doing more. I stand on the record of this side of the House on the environment any day of the week.