




Speech By
Jessica Pugh

MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (11.58 am): It is always great to rise on matters of the environment. To refer back to the member for Southport's contribution, I will paraphrase in the best way I know how the words of the mighty Taylor Swift. She said, 'It's me, hi. I'm the problem, it's me.' If the member for Southport gets that many explanations then maybe it is not the explanation—I am just saying.

I want to touch on what the member for Pine Rivers said. I was going to leave this to the end of my contribution, but what the member for Pine Rivers said about the Wet Tropics and the community expectation is exactly right. It is not just the expectation of the immediate community, it is the expectation of Queenslanders that we have to protect our special areas. We are lucky; I think we all know that. We are proud of the areas we represent. I represent 35 square kilometres, or thereabouts, of Queensland. I know other members represent much larger parts than that.

My little patch of Queensland is incredibly proud of Far North Queensland and we know how beautiful it is. I think that Queenslanders would support amendments in the bill that enact those environmental objectives. They include amendments to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993 which ensure mining is prohibited in the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area. The Wet Tropics are a mighty long way from my electorate of Mount Ommaney. I hope that one day every Queenslander gets the opportunity to visit, but every single Queenslander would know it is vitally important that we act to protect them. I am sure my community will be really keen to see that enshrined in legislation. As I said, even though it is well outside my patch, a lot of people do come to see me about other parts of Queensland. They say, 'I want to see these areas protected,' and protected in legislation is the best way to do that. Queenslanders expect nothing less.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring this legislation delivers on the government's priorities but also meets those industry needs, so a lot of the amendments in the legislation have been initiated in response to industry feedback. The bill improves the estimated rehabilitation cost and progressive rehabilitation and closure planning frameworks by inserting a process for changing an application for an estimated rehabilitation cost decision. This will support industry by providing a clear process for them to change their application before it is decided. An estimated rehabilitated cost decision is required for particular environmental authority holders for a resource activity, and it is obviously critical that a smooth process is in place to enable these holders to obtain that decision.

The bill also inserts a new transitional provision to clarify how environmental authority holders transition into the progressive rehabilitation and closure planning framework. The transition to the progressive rehabilitation and closure planning framework is nearing completion. This is great news. It means most of the mines that are required to have a progressive rehabilitation plan or a closure plan will have one. For those few mines that are still transitioning, the bill includes amendments to remove the ambiguity around whether the relevant transitional provisions apply. This will address a risk that industry could be operating in noncompliance with the provision.