




Speech By
Hon. Meaghan Scanlon

MEMBER FOR GAVEN

Record of Proceedings, 11 May 2023

MOTION

Far North Queensland, Service Delivery

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs) (4.06 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the motion as amended. It is always a pleasure to speak after the member for Whitsunday to respond to some of the outrageous allegations that she just made, particularly given the LNP's track record to cut 225 Child Safety workers.

Ms Camm interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, member for Whitsunday!

Ms SCANLON: If she wants to talk about domestic and family violence, I can say that women now feel safe to come forward—

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Whitsunday, you are warned. You have just made your contribution. The member on their feet is responding and you are constantly interjecting. You are warned.

Ms SCANLON: Women can now come forward because we have resourced the services and we have changed the laws. What private members' motions or any policies have we heard from those opposite? Nothing!

Ms Camm interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Whitsunday, you can leave the chamber for an hour.

Whereupon the honourable member for Whitsunday withdrew from the chamber at 4.07 pm.

Ms SCANLON: It was this government that restored frontline services after they were gutted by those opposite.

Ms Fentiman: Gutted and gagged.

Ms SCANLON: I take the interjection from the Attorney-General; they were gutted and gagged. Of course, our Labor government has a very proud legacy in Far North Queensland and we have fantastic local members, including the first ever Torres Strait Islander person elected to any parliament in the world, and they are massive advocates for frontline services in this community and also in protecting the environmental and economic jewel in Queensland's crown, the Great Barrier Reef.

On the way here I was reflecting that it was almost 50 years ago that the Whitlam Labor government who created the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and that the then Bjelke-Petersen government—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Kawana, you are warned.

Ms SCANLON: I take the interjection from the member for Kawana. It was, of course, the Bjelke-Petersen government that wanted to drill for oil in the reef. It is our government that protected the Great Barrier Reef. They have learned very little because only just this week the member for Currumbin in a speech was talking up all of the wonderful achievements of Joh Bjelke-Petersen. It was bizarre. They have clearly learned nothing.

It is only a Labor government that will stand up for the reef. We have committed \$270 million to continue our water quality program. To date, since coming to government we have spent nearly a billion dollars. This builds on the reef regulations we introduced in 2019.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Ms SCANLON: I take the member for Nanango's interjection. It is relevant. We are in Far North Queensland and the motion is directly relevant to the Great Barrier Reef.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Ms SCANLON: The member may not think it is relevant, but I can assure her Far North Queenslanders think the Great Barrier Reef is relevant.

In 2018 we introduced stronger tree-clearing laws, again opposed by those opposite. We banned the dumping of dredge spoil. Who can forget the member for Glass House at the time staging a boycott of Ben & Jerry's ice cream because they supported the Fight for the Reef campaign that was trying to halt the dumping of dredge spoil? That is their track record, and then they reappointed him to the front bench.

We know that taking strong action on climate change is incredibly important to the Great Barrier Reef. That is why we are investing in things like electric vehicle charging infrastructure. We have an ambitious energy plan to transition our coal-fired power stations to clean energy hubs, all while maintaining public ownership and delivering a jobs guarantee. We have almost hit our emissions reduction target nine years early—something I have heard nothing about from the opposition. Of course, all of this would be at risk if those opposite were elected to government. They systemically revoked almost every important environmental policy that this government and former Labor governments established.

The Leader of the Opposition was at the decision-making table when the LNP watered down reef protections, tore up tree-clearing protections, axed renewable energy projects, cut climate change programs and abolished the waste levy. The best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour, and we know precisely how the LNP would act in government. You only have to listen to the loud chorus of the LNP's self-described 'cookers' to know where they stand. You have Barnaby Joyce calling climate action 'barking mad'; Matt Canavan, a member of the Queensland Liberal National Party, calling climate change 'a scam'; Gerard Rennick saying 'it's not like I don't care about the environment, I just don't believe in the science of climate change'.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Ms SCANLON: I take the interjection from the Leader of the Opposition. The member for Glass House said, 'Is the climate changing? Yes. Am I 100 per cent convinced of human population's role? No, I'm not.' They are the views of those opposite.

(Time expired)