



Speech By  
**Sandy Bolton**


**MEMBER FOR NOOSA**

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## **ADJOURNMENT**

### **Cooloola Great Walk**

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (7.19 pm): The people of Noosa fought hard for their national parks and are vested in ensuring they are managed and resourced appropriately. Prior to 2013, the main and only objective of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 was ‘the conservation of nature’, often referred to as the cardinal principle. Conservation was defined as being the protection and maintenance of nature while allowing for its ecological sustainable use. This objective was amended in 2013 by the LNP government to allow the involvement of Indigenous people, as well as social, cultural and commercial use, which was removed in 2015 by the current government, retaining the section relating to the involvement of Indigenous people.

This sounds rightly appropriate in efforts of reconciliation. However, as we have seen in Noosa with the Cooloola Great Walk project, good intent does not overcome some concerns in our community. First is in the definition of ‘conservation’ and ‘ecological sustainable development’, which in the act talks about not diminishing the potential to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations. This is sufficiently vague, creating mistrust, especially when you add the complexities and confidentiality around the contents of Indigenous land use agreements and native title claims.

Second, Noosa is a compassionate and inclusive community and is extremely supportive of efforts that involve First Nations people. However, this support is at risk through a lack of finer detail in the Cooloola project itself, the Indigenous land use agreement and native title negotiations, poor communication from government and public conflict between local Indigenous factions. Currently, I am awaiting a response from the Kabi Kabi corporation in response to questions from Kabi Kabi women, as we have no state government avenues for some answers. Given we have just celebrated International Women’s Day, which was wonderful in my community, it is appropriate that these questions be answered.

In addition, I have requested a meeting be convened between Kabi Kabi factions to find a common path to walk together. As I have been advised that it is inappropriate for non-Indigenous to attend such meetings, it is hoped that they would then consent to gathering afterwards with our community in order to clear the air about their conflict in a transparent, respectful and meaningful way. This is essential and, until this occurs, final approvals for the Cooloola Great Walk project should not be granted to ensure a future free of negativity.

Be assured that I remain supportive of Kabi Kabi efforts, as would the vast majority of Noosa residents. However, it is not possible to support processes and projects that lack open and timely communication from all involved. If we cannot get some truth-telling in relation to this, we are not providing the environment and framework necessary for a successful return to country for Kabi Kabi, nor endeavours such as Path to Treaty.