




Speech By
Stephen Bennett

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

Record of Proceedings, 14 September 2023

ADJOURNMENT

Woodgate Seawall

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (6.24 pm): I want to bring to the attention of the House a serious issue that is evolving at Woodgate. We have had a real issue with the seawall and erosion over many years. A delay in approvals is contributing to this issue. It is understood that today a revised approval has been given to the Bundaberg Regional Council. The Bundaberg Regional Council's Woodgate Beach sand nourishment program was granted \$2 million in July last year. The project was then called in by the department and the tender process had to be put on hold. The project has since come to a grinding halt. One condition on the new approval is ceasing for nesting sea turtles. In 17 days time the project has to cease until April next year.

The reason it is a serious issue is that we have already lost bike paths, we are at risk of losing some of the main road and, more important, if a high tide at Christmas busts through the seawall we are at serious risk of losing homes. This has been a big issue. All those things are serious.

It is now five months since the original approval and the blunder was acknowledged by the department. If the bureaucratic interference is not bad enough, the department is now—can members believe this?—demanding sand be bought from the Hervey Bay or the Port of Bundaberg, a 100-kilometre round trip, when there is plenty of sand for sand nourishment on the beach at Theodolite Creek or on the main beach at Woodgate.

As I have said, the foreshore pathway has collapsed. We have had a man and his dog fall into a hole. No sea turtles have ever nested in this area. We are talking about homes and roads that seriously need to be dealt with right now. This is a terrifying reality at Woodgate and residents facing this are scared. The refusal to approve this vital project will cost the community dearly. It is yet another example of the government's failure to listen to the people on the ground.

Yesterday I asked a question on notice. I will not read it out given the time left. Basically it asks: why is this sand nourishment program being delayed? The money was approved and granted by the Queensland Reconstruction Authority. Why is the department demanding that the sand be brought from 100 kilometres away on our road network when sand can be and should be taken from the local area? This is about a rock wall that will be replenished, covered over and revegetated. It will not be an eyesore but a saviour for the people of Woodgate who want this area taken care of.

The Woodgate and District Residents Association are reporting the community's fear is growing around this issue. There is frustration and anger every high tide as they lose a little more of the beach. King tides are pending over the coming Christmas period. If we have a storm surge we are worried. We have asked the ministers to come to Woodgate to meet with the people and listen to their concerns. Let us get this fixed.