




Speech By
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LAND AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (5.19 pm): Many have spoken about the main purpose of this bill. I will not follow through with that because I think it has all been said. I want to look at the process. The process of this bill should bring blushes to the minister's cheeks and certainly some in the department.

First and foremost, clause 94 seeks to amend the Vegetation Management Regulation through a sneaky, underhanded attempt to disguise this section. It is alarming that a bill so long awaited by industry included this desperate attempt at amending vegetation management regulations without proper scrutiny. What was trying to be achieved here—and my colleague from Bonney mentioned this—was an opportunity whereby this House would be sidestepped in future when it came to important decisions about the management of our vegetation in Queensland. Vegetation management is always a contentious issue when it comes to the environment, food production, resource extraction and everything else. Vegetation management is a sensitive area and incredibly important. For a bill to be proposed in this House that would casually brush that to the backroom and have it slip through is not a practice that any minister should be encouraging or any department should be recommending. I think it is important to look at that part of the process.

Then what we have—and whether it was an attempt to try and hide the sneakiness of the first part—is the explanatory notes. It is extraordinary that the explanatory notes were so incompetently put together and placed into this House—even to the point where the hard copy and the electronic copy were not the same. It was breathtaking that they had so many mistakes. That is something that I would encourage the government to take a long, hard look at. I do not think anybody in Queensland appreciates the idea of something sneaky and underhanded with future legislation and going around the people's house. Secondly, presenting explanatory notes that are confused and inaccurate—it is bizarre how they even ended up here—is strange and peculiar. It is a real shame the guillotine will drop and we will not get to go through consideration in detail because I would love to see the minister go through and try to explain all the clauses. It was confusing for us even when we had plenty of time to look at it because they were poorly put together. With all of that, the process has been fundamentally flawed, poorly executed and badly drafted.

Then this morning we found ourselves facing the situation of the same question rule regarding a piece of legislation this House has already considered. The government had to again go through the embarrassing process of setting aside standing orders of this House so that they can amend the part of the bill that would otherwise contravene what has already been passed.

We arrive at a situation where I would ask the minister to reflect on his department. I would ask the government to reflect on the number of media advisers they have versus people who are drafting and looking at explanatory notes and parts of legislation. One of the fundamental purposes of this place is to ensure that we have good legislation that will serve the needs and requirements of the people of Queensland that is openly and transparently presented and debated with time for stakeholders to have a look at it so that they can consider the detail and there are no unforeseen circumstances. We know

this Labor government likes to skip around some of the transparency items and hide things, but this is a glaring example of it trying to be sneaky, being clearly incompetent and, by the way, as late as this morning contradicting itself.

When we strip away all the poor drafting, bad explanatory notes, contrary points of view and everything else, the bill has some worthy elements that we can all support, and I do. I think this should be looked at closely as not an example of good process for this House. With those few words and with the minister's blushes exposed, I support the principle of the bill but the process was fundamentally flawed.