




Speech By
Stephen Bennett

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

Record of Proceedings, 16 April 2024

LAND AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (11.56 am): While not belittling the bill or its multiple facets, I am going to confine my contribution to a really positive part of the bill. In the last sitting week, the minister was quite gracious in acknowledging the work that has been done to save issues around tenure in state government buildings.

It is stated that the policy objectives of the legislation are to improve regulatory efficiency and ensure the administration of state lands and buildings is responsive to community needs. As I said, I will be limiting my comments to the provisions that will allow sensible changes in dealing with government assets, in particular tenancies and usage. I want to make special mention of the staff, parents, students and the board of Goora Gan Steiner School based in Agnes Water. This school is led by an amazing person, Melissa Thomson, who has navigated a pathway for the school's secure tenure. Goora Gan Steiner School is located by the beach in Agnes Water with a focus on holistic education and cultural diversity. It is an accredited P-6 primary school and is the first school of its kind in the Wide Bay. The school was founded in 2015 with a blessing of Goora Gan elders, and we all know of Uncle Merv's strong connection with this school.

As enrolment numbers grew, the school was fortunate to relocate in March 2019 from its founding location to its current beachside place at the Agnes Water surf club. The Goora Gan school continues to inspire students to become compassionate, critical thinkers through innovative teaching methods. I have had the privilege of visiting and working with the staff on many occasions, and I am always extremely impressed with their welcoming and inclusive environment. They have come a very long way in a short period of time and I am proud to have such a wonderful school in the Burnett electorate.

I want to publicly thank the minister and the department for the work they have done in addressing our concerns. It is a real pleasure to work in a bipartisan way in this place to achieve positive outcomes through legislative reform. We have made sure that the winners are our community and particularly young people in this education environment.

The legislation will provide flexibility to reflect changing community needs, with more than 21,000 state land reserves being managed by trustees for a variety of community purposes. In many cases, they reflect a narrow, prescribed purpose limiting their use. I am sure many people in this place have had a similar outcome. What we have asked for over many years and what I have spoken about in this place is that, when the minister is confronted with an unforeseen community need that is not compatible with the Land Act, decisions could be made in the best interests of a community.

The Agnes Water surf club is a state owned building located on Springs Road, Agnes Water. The Agnes Water Surf Life Saving Club still holds the lease to the building, which runs until 2037. The earliest records available relate to the lease starting in 1997, which we believe is when the surf club moved to its current location. This school now has 71 students who have secure tenure. We did have real fears that this building would be vacant after the sublease issue could not be resolved. It is important that we look at this school and the lease going forward. To explain it a bit further for those who are not familiar with it, the tenure was not in keeping with educational facilities.

In conclusion, I want to make sure the minister and the department get the acknowledgement they deserve. I pay tribute to the Goora Gan Steiner School for the work they are doing. We want to thank Surf Life Saving Queensland for their cooperation in making sure the secure tenure was allowed for this educational facility to continue.