




Speech By  
**Tony Perrett**

**MEMBER FOR GYMPIE**

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## **RESOURCES SAFETY AND HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL; MINERAL AND ENERGY RESOURCES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (4.21 pm): I rise to speak in the cognate debate on the Resources Safety and Health Legislation Amendment Bill and the Mineral and Energy Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The primary purpose of the Mineral and Energy Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill is to deal with coal seam gas. It aims to enhance the state's coexistence network regarding coal seam gas projects, improve regulatory efficiency and modernise the Financial Provisioning Scheme. It will also provide a framework for managing the impacts of gas-induced subsidence. Concerningly, after almost 10 years, the recurring theme is that the government fails to conduct meaningful consultation, bills are rushed, the government avoids conducting any analysis of the impacts and financial implications, legislation is confusing and unclear and, where possible, it runs from oversight. The Mineral and Energy Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill is no different. It has ticked all the boxes. Cotton Australia said—

... to expect landholders and their representatives to become fully conversant with the Bill in two weeks is completely unrealistic, and not conducive to good democratic processes.

Cotton Australia called on the committee to keep these unrealistic timeframes in mind and allow plenty of latitude for the introduction of new material. AgForce advised that the limited time 'significantly increased the risk of unintended consequences and adverse outcomes'.

Queensland's future depends on the protection of high-value agricultural land and the natural resources such as water which support the agricultural industries and communities which rely on them. Policies, regulation and legislation must balance support for landholders' rights and other users. They must not create power imbalances between competing interests. Agreements, protections, rights and obligations must be fair and equitable.

There is irrefutable and clear evidence that subsidence from coal seam gas extraction, or CSG, is occurring and will keep occurring. Its impacts on landscapes are clear, but the impact on the economic and the productive capacity of the land has not yet been determined.

While the committee was advised that some landholders report no economic impact and others report an impact, what is clear is that impacts do not stop at farm boundaries. Consequently, there is a wide range of legitimately held views and experiences across the agricultural sector about coexisting with CSG. There are those producers and farmers who support coexistence and embrace new opportunities. There are those who are concerned about environmental risks, about future impacts on their natural resources and the viability of their businesses. There are those who are concerned about potential groundwater contamination and the impact it will have on the sector.

Cotton Australia said that the resources and agricultural industries cannot coexist, that coexistence cannot be mandated on an industry. The Chief Executive Officer of the Queensland Farmers' Federation, Jo Sheppard, submitted to the committee that—

... the opportunity for a resource company and an individual farmer to coexist, with appropriate landholder protections and supports, is feasible and achievable. However, mandating coexistence across an industry as a whole, is not.

The Queensland Farmers' Federation raised several concerns about the bill regarding arbitration, entry to private land, regional risk assessments, subsidence management plans, compensation and critical consequences. It submitted that the resource developer must be responsible for landholders' arbitration costs and for landholders' rights to be acknowledged and protected regarding entry to private land. It called for landscape-wide and individual farm modelling, measuring and monitoring, as well as analysis of the impact to overland flow. It submitted that compensation should be underpinned by the guiding principle that the productive capacity of agricultural land be maintained or restored. The Queensland Farmers' Federation welcomed the ability to cease CSG development should critical impacts be identified. However, it said there was no clarity about who decides and what determines a critical consequence, and this measure applies to farmers who are already experiencing adverse impacts. While Queensland Farmers' Federation supported subsidence management plans, it is vital that landholders have confidence in them. Queensland Farmers' Federation submitted that the cost should be borne by the developer and the involvement of appropriately skilled expertise including agronomy, agricultural, agronomic, agro-economic, water and land management skills. It called for the department of agriculture to play a central role in ensuring this.

AgForce represents more than 6,000 farmers, businesses and individuals across 55 million hectares or a third of the state area. They cover industries from cane, cattle, broadacre cropping, grain, and sheep, wool and goat producers. It has established a set of guiding principles about protection of land use. Those principles require that alternative and potentially impacting land uses ensure: a recognition that natural capital has an inherent value; human health and wellbeing must not be sacrificed; precautions that avoid negative legacy effects on natural resources; and that there are no negative impacts on existing or future sustainable agricultural opportunities. While AgForce supported the need for a CSG induced subsidence management framework, it submitted that the chapter proposed in this bill does not deliver the intention of the bill and does not protect the interests of AgForce members. It said—

Some of the provisions are a major reduction of AgForce members' rights and are not compatible with AgForce Land Use Protection Principles.

It also found the framework was very limited because of its reliance on many regulations which have not yet been written and called for the chapter to be significantly revised.

As was foreshadowed by the shadow minister, the LNP was to move amendments to address the serious concerns about the breadth and scope of measures in this bill regarding subsidence management. However, I now note the minister has listened to the LNP and shadow minister Dale Last and withdrawn these provisions. Well done, member for Burdekin, and thank you, minister, for heeding this advice.