

Speech By

Wayde Chiesa

MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Resources Industry, Critical Minerals

Mr CHIESA (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (3.01 pm): In the Hinchinbrook electorate we understand the balance between agriculture and resources. We get it. We are home to some of Queensland's great agricultural industries—sugar, cattle, bananas and horticulture. We also have thousands of people who live in our communities and work either directly or indirectly in the mining industry. We have families whose livelihoods depend on agriculture, mining, refining, processing and the industries that support them.

We understand that Queensland does not have to choose between agriculture and resources. We need them both. Right now there is an enormous opportunity in front of regional Queensland. Global demand for critical minerals is growing. The critical minerals framework between Australia and the United States has created renewed momentum to establish secure supply chains, and North and North-West Queensland can be a major part in supplying that demand. We have the resources. We have the expertise. We have mining communities across the north-west, and we have Townsville's industrial and refining capability sitting on the doorstep.

However, to capture this opportunity, our legislation needs to keep pace. The State Development and Public Works Organisation Act dates back to 1971. The legislation that we passed last night modernises that framework, reduces unnecessary regulatory duplication and gives Queensland better tools to facilitate major products and attract investment. Despite some of the commentary surrounding the bill, many of the powers being discussed are not new. Compulsory acquisition powers for private infrastructure projects have existed in Queensland since 1999.

This legislation provides greater clarity and transparency around when those powers can be used—and, importantly, there are safeguards. Landholders retain the rights to consultation, objection and compensation. Environmental approvals remain, and proponents must demonstrate at least six months of genuine negotiations with a landholder before an acquisition pathway can even be considered.

Good governments also listen. Agricultural groups and regional Queenslanders raised legitimate concerns about protecting prime agricultural land and the scope of state strategic projects. We listened and we acted. The legislation was amended to ensure a modification order cannot move a regional interests development approval where one is required, providing certainty around protections for prime agricultural land. Renewable energy projects—including wind, solar and batteries—were excluded from being state strategic projects and so, too, were data centres. This is what listening looks like. It is not simply having consultation and carrying on regardless. It is hearing concerns, considering them and, where legislation can be improved, making the changes.

Back home in Hinchinbrook we understand the balance. We can protect our farmers and productive agricultural land while backing our resources sector, we can attract investment while maintaining appropriate safeguards, and we can ensure North and North-West Queensland are at the centre of Australia's critical minerals future.

(Time expired)