



Speech By
Hon. Jann Stuckey

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

Record of Proceedings, 20 November 2013

**NORTH STRADBROKE ISLAND PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABILITY AND
ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. JA STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (10.01 pm): I rise to contribute to the North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability and Another Act Amendment Bill 2013 introduced into this place by the honourable Minister for Natural Resources and Mines and member for Hinchinbrook on 17 October this year. This bill discards once and for all the uncertainty that hasty, politically motivated decisions by the former Labor government imposed upon the citizens of North Stradbroke Island and provides them with long-term economic security. This will be achieved by the announcement that the Newman government will extend the timeline for the end of sandmining to 2035.

In 2011 the former Premier pandered to green groups by announcing a ban on sandmining on North Stradbroke Island by 2025 with the closure of the Sibelco mine in 2019. Almost in the same breath then Premier Bligh tipped tourism to overtake mining as the key economic driver. As shadow minister for tourism at the time I vividly recall the concerns raised by many locals over such an ambitious goal being delivered in too short a period. And I vividly recall Labor's apathetic approach to tourism, a once-vibrant industry that they neglected and then buried under layers of red tape. Without a plan as to how this supposed tourism surge was going to eventuate and such tight restrictions on operators, it was little wonder that Mr John Aitken, the head of Brisbane Marketing, said—

The decision would require the equivalent of five Tangalooma resorts, a feat that would not happen within the former Premier's rushed timetable.

Lo and behold, like so many other Labor commitments it has proven to be nothing more than an empty promise like so many before it: announced but not delivered by the previous Labor government. As the 2019 deadline approached, the inaction of those opposite left insufficient time for the economy of North Stradbroke Island to transition out of its dependence on mining and no current alternative economic activity of any comparable size would be capable of generating a similar economic impact to replace current mining operations.

For too long Labor took this great industry for granted, exploiting it at every turn. News that sandmining can continue until 2035 gives this government time to work in partnership with industry, something very foreign to those opposite, to explore appropriate alternate economic drivers. Speaking tonight as the minister for tourism and small business, I am delighted that this extension will allow us to work with Brisbane Marketing, Redland City Council, residents and the Quandamooka people to maximise sustainable tourism opportunities across the island.

As the second-largest sand island in the world and boasting numerous natural attractions, including beaches, lakes and national parks, North Stradbroke Island's ecotourism potential is boundless. Residents and operators can be assured that the Newman government's commitment to diversify their economy will be backed by our plans to grow tourism as one of the four pillars of the Queensland economy. I was delighted to join Minister Cripps earlier today to announce a \$200,000

signature Straddie package. The package will be developed and managed by Tourism and Events Queensland in close consultation with Brisbane Marketing, Redland City Council and local operators. The package will run over the next 18 to 24 months and will involve two key components. Firstly, the signature experience development, supporting operators identifying the hero experiences for North Stradbroke Island. This will provide the destination with a competitive edge focusing on its unique attributes and key target markets. Secondly, it will be Straddie eco-ready, helping operators move their businesses to a sustainable basis and to access ecotourism accreditation, which is mandatory to operate tours in national parks. Planning for the long-term success of tourism needs to start now and I want to sincerely thank Minister Cripps for providing this package in recognition of the need to develop the ecotourism potential of North Stradbroke Island.

Development of a 20-year plan for tourism is well underway with solid input from 13 RTOs and destinations that they represent right across our great state and will be finalised before the end of this year. This comprehensive plan identifies ecotourism as a long-term competitive advantage for Queensland and contains strategies to overcome impediments to attracting new ecotourism opportunities—although one might say that the greatest impediment to ecotourism has been the Labor Party over many, many years here in Queensland.

The tourism future of North Stradbroke Island, or Minjerribah as it is called, will form part of the Brisbane destination tourism plan, ensuring we can provide long-term support to deliver the needs of the industry on the island and to ensure that tourism is considered as a long-term economic alternative to mining. I note the honourable member for Cleveland nodding, and he should know.

The recent amendments to the Nature Conservation Act 1992 passed by the House earlier this year will help to facilitate tourism on North Stradbroke Island by allowing private ecotourism facilities in national parks. My department's tourism investment attraction unit, charged with facilitating tourism investment opportunities, has been inundated with interest from international investors to invest in tourism across Queensland since its inception.

I am very pleased to report that forward bookings for camp sites on this magnificent island over December and January has been overwhelming, with campers at over 100 sites all paying full price in advance. This response gives an idea of the demand for this popular tourism hot spot with families and the need to very carefully manage future plans and developments with community input. I am really proud of this government's record on delivering its commitment to Queenslanders. This bill outlines further our commitment to work with all interested parties to develop a positive future for North Stradbroke Island. I commend the minister for bringing it before the House and I am very pleased to support it here tonight.