



Speech By
Mark Robinson

MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND

Record of Proceedings, 25 May 2016

**NORTH STRADBROKE ISLAND PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABILITY AND
OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL; NORTH STRADBROKE ISLAND
PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABILITY (RENEWAL OF MINING LEASES)
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (9.39 pm): I rise to oppose Labor's job-destroying North Stradbroke Island bill, because Labor's bill does not allow sufficient time or resources for a proper transition from mining without causing mass job losses and community pain. Due to the short time allotted to me today I will restrict my comments to specific aspects of Labor's bill, though I commend the member for Dalrymple for seeking a compromise in this regard.

The issue is not whether mining should or should not be phased out but how quickly and smoothly that transition takes place. If 2019 is passed, what are the impacts of the sudden loss of a major employer on the 2,000-plus people in the townships and on the businesses and jobs currently dependent on that employer? My fear as the local member for the last seven years is that if Labor's 2019 bill is passed tonight, and without an adequate economic transition strategy, SBS will have another potential site for *Struggle Street*. Yes, SBS could consider running *Struggle Street: Straddie* in 2020.

The sudden loss of a projected 300 direct and indirect jobs would bring unnecessary hardship on the island's residents and potentially create a *Struggle Street* environment that the island may never recover from. Australian Workers' Union State Secretary Ben Swan summed up the situation with respect to Labor's 2019 decision to shut down the mine prematurely when he said that it would be a kick in the guts for workers. This is a Labor man saying that it would be a kick in the guts for workers!

Why 2019? Where did that come from? It is important to understand that 2019 is a premature date and that the community has expected for a long time that leases would be renewed on a rolling basis into the late 2020s and even 2030s and then mining would end. Historically, all Cleveland and Redlands MPs and state governments, until the Bligh government, have supported mining continuing well into the 2020s and 2030s, including long-term Cleveland member Darryl Briskey, a well-respected Labor member; Phil Weightman, another respected Labor member; and the Goss and Beattie Labor governments. It was not until the Bligh government that Labor even considered an early closure.

Where did 2019 come from? I will highlight three aspects. The first is a Greens preference deal. 2019 is the Greens' date. The Greens chose the date of the expected lease renewal for Enterprise mine as their wish list date for shutting mining down. The Bligh Labor government needed Greens preferences desperately to survive the 2012 election, so then premier Bligh acquiesced to the Greens date. Ben Swan, in his role as secretary of the AWU, described it perfectly when he said—

This decision speaks more to the soy milk latte sipping politics of Paddington and West End in inner city Brisbane than it does to the Government's stated objective of supporting jobs and sustainable resource development throughout Queensland.

It was a Greens preference deal with Labor's Far Left. The second aspect is the supposed election promise. Outgoing Labor MP Tim Mulherin wrote a letter to an island stakeholder group—albeit an important stakeholder group—about 2019. That was announced just a few days before the 2015 election. The island residents did not see this as an election promise to them as it was not by the normal means. It was irregular. It was not by the Labor leader, not via a media event and not to the whole community. In fact, the island residents consider that the election promise from this Labor government is to protect jobs on the island. 'Jobs, jobs, jobs' was the mantra in the 2015 election. That is what they expected those opposite to do—to keep their jobs, not the cuts, cuts, cuts of the Deputy Premier.

Ms Trad interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order!

Mr Crandon interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Crandon interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Coomera, order! I will start warning members. Both the member for Cleveland and the Deputy Premier need to direct their comments through the chair, not across the chamber.

Dr ROBINSON: They expected their jobs on the island to be protected as an election promise. They expected their jobs to be safeguarded, not destroyed by a Labor government. The people of Straddie will hold this Labor government accountable once again, as they have in the last two elections on the island, if Labor seeks to sack workers in breach of its election promise.

The third aspect is Indigenous injustice. A more recent argument that has been put forward is that if mining continues beyond 2019 the government will be in breach of the Quandamooka native title claim and the ILUA with the Queensland government. Legal advice contradicts this position, including crown legal advice of the Palaszczuk government, crown legal advice of the Newman government, legal advice from the federal government and the Quandamooka traditional owners. Some of those who have sought legal advice have come to a conclusion different from what a couple of the QYAC elders have come to. Legal advice rules out the issue of Aboriginal injustice through continuation of mining past 2019. Quandamooka traditional owners have written to the High Court foreshadowing a potential challenge to Labor's 2019 bill if it gets up tonight. That is traditional owners—Quandamooka people—challenging this Labor government because it has not listened to them. They claim that ending mining prematurely—

Ms Trad interjected.

Dr ROBINSON: You have had your say and I listened to it respectfully.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Cleveland, I have asked you to direct your comments through the chair. I appreciate that this is a matter about which you are very passionate.

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of Opposition Business—

Mr SEENEY: Point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. Since when have members in this House not been entitled to respond to interjections? There was a clear interjection from the government, to which the member for Cleveland—

Mr Power interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members! Member for Logan, the Leader of Opposition Business is entitled to raise a point of order without being interrupted by you.

Mr SEENEY: Madam Deputy Speaker, I pose the question to you: since when have members in this House not been allowed to respond—

Ms TRAD: Point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Deputy Premier, allow the Leader of Opposition Business to put his point of order. Then—

Ms TRAD: I think he is reflecting on the chair, not making a point of order.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Deputy Premier, please resume your seat. Leader of Opposition Business, that is not what I was saying. I was asking the member for Cleveland to direct his comments through the chair, as is appropriate under the standing orders of this House. He is entitled to respond to interjections. I did not say that he was not. I simply asked that he direct his comments through the chair, as is appropriate under the standing orders.

Ms Grace interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister for Employment, I do not need your assistance either, thank you very much. Member for Cleveland, you have the call.

Dr ROBINSON: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for your protection from a very overexcited government.

Some of the traditional owners claim that ending mining prematurely in 2019 may remove their native title rights as it would reduce the royalties from mining to the Aboriginal people, amongst other rights. In summary, the real reason for Labor adopting the Greens' 2019 end date is the election promise of Labor not to the people of North Stradbroke Island but to the Greens political party and a few other supporters of the Labor left.

I note that the Finance and Administration Committee's report did not recommend that Labor's bill be passed. The bipartisan parliamentary committee made no favourable recommendation of Labor's 2019 bill. It did not recommend that the bill be passed. It made no positive recommendation about that bill.

I thank the committee for its good work and for attending open public meetings on the island and for listening to the community. The report captures the great anger from island residents about this premature closing. Unfortunately the Premier could not find the time to listen to the residents as she committed to do so in the parliament. Instead, she went to Straddie on a holiday. The Deputy Premier held secret and closed meetings with the ETU only. Minister Miles visited the island to go scuba diving and riding in boats.

Ms TRAD: I rise to a point of order. That is untrue. I find it offensive.

Dr ROBINSON: You went to the ETU meetings.

Ms TRAD: I ask him to withdraw.

Dr ROBINSON: I withdraw. There were meetings on the island with the Electrical Trades Union that the Deputy Premier attended.

Ms TRAD: Madam Deputy Speaker, they are untrue. I find them personally offensive. I ask him to withdraw. He should get his facts right.

Dr ROBINSON: Madam Deputy Speaker, I withdraw and I will be writing to the Speaker soon in terms of the member's misleading of the House. No senior member from the government had the time to meet the people in an open public meeting. With regard to the economic transition strategy and in terms of no regulatory impact statement ever being done by the government—deliberately I suspect—the government is flying blind when it comes to the extent of the impacts of its job-destroying bill. Queensland Resources Council boss Michael Roche raised industry concerns that a 2019 end to sandmining on the island was unachievable. He said that there was simply no way that the government could come up with a plan that replaces by 2019 the hundreds of jobs and the annual economic injection from sandmining.

Based on all available evidence from the CCIQ, Straddie Chamber of Commerce, Redlands Chamber of Commerce, Sibelco and other sources, Labor's bill will likely have a hugely detrimental impact on the local residents in terms of mass job losses—up to 300 is estimated—as well as economic, social, Indigenous and environmental impacts. The time until 2019 is simply not enough from a starting date of now for the economic transition from sandmining. The time frame for the transition that is brought about by Labor's bill—only three years—is too short. There are many other things that I could say. Tourism in the short term will not make up the gap. Toondah Harbour in the short term, as good as that project is—started under an LNP government—will not make up the gap until in the 2020s. There was no community consultation about the decision itself—a matter that key stakeholders have complained about. The community was not involved in the conversation. The community at around about 80 per cent to 90 per cent is opposed to Labor's 2019 bill—something it worked very hard to keep secret from the rest of Queensland. The Indigenous people and the many groups that make up the Quandamooka people have spoken to us and they are largely against the government's closure in 2019. I oppose Labor's bill.