




Speech By
Jeff Seeney

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

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SUSTAINABLE PORTS DEVELOPMENT BILL

 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (12.19 pm): Listening to the member for South Brisbane reminds me of that famous quote from Margaret Thatcher, ‘The only problem with socialism is that sooner or later you run out of other people’s money.’ The only problem with the socialist left running this Labor government is that sooner or later they will run out of other people’s achievements to take credit for. Sooner or later they will have to do something for themselves. For the member for South Brisbane to speak the way she did about this particular issue and the work that has been done around the Great Barrier Reef is fundamentally absurd, and she knows it. We all know it. The media know it, which is why they never carry the absurd comments that they make. Those comments are tailor-made for the philosophical zealots in West End who are blind to anything but their own fantasies. I know that what we see in this parliament is not going to stop. These people are going to stand up here day after day, as they have done for months, and try and claim credit for things that they could not achieve when Labor was previously in government—and which I confidently expect they will not achieve in the years to come—but they take credit for the achievements and the work that we did in the time that we were in government.

When we came to government the Labor government’s proposal for Abbot Point, for example, was to dredge and dump 35 million cubic metres of sediment to build an artificial island and connect it to the mainland. One of my favourite memories is when I went down to Canberra to meet with Labor environment minister Tony Burke. I unrolled the map of Abbot Point on his desk and I said, ‘This is what is proposed: 35 million cubic metres and nine new coal terminals. We are going to wipe the lot. It is off the table. We are not going to do that. We are going to proceed in a more measured, incremental way.’ That was the start of a new approach to the Great Barrier Reef and to the challenge of ensuring that we protect what every Queenslanders loves while bringing about the development that every Queenslanders needs. That is the fundamental issue that the socialist left and the member for South Brisbane never address. Everybody loves the Great Barrier Reef. Every Queenslanders loves the Great Barrier Reef. You do not have to be part of the socialist collective and have spent your life in Young Labor to understand how wonderful it is and to care about the Great Barrier Reef. We all care about that. The difference is that the rest of us also care about the Queensland economy. The rest of us also care about providing jobs and economic growth for our kids.

For the sake of the record, the draft Queensland Ports Strategy was released by me on 24 October 2013. It was part of a public consultation process around a strategic assessment which I always thought did not do justice to the body of work that was involved. In consultation with UNESCO and the federal government, we agreed to undertake the strategic assessment that the former federal government would not do. As my ministerial colleagues will recall, I often said that it was so long, complex and complicated that we would never get to the end of it. But we did, and the strategic assessment was signed off by the federal and state governments on 11 August 2014. The Ports Bill arose out of that. I do not put my hand up and say that I take credit for many things, but I stood firm on

the point that we had to have a stand-alone piece of legislation for ports for two reasons (1) because the nature of Queensland's geography meant that there were always going to be ports needed adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef; and (2) the economic future of Queensland depended on those ports being able to be developed and operated properly. The ports legislation that we proposed was about ensuring that we found the balance between protecting the reef that every Queenslanders wants and providing the jobs and the economic growth that every Queenslanders needs.

For the member for South Brisbane and the member for Stafford and all these other nameless Labor members to come in here and read speeches that are written by someone who does not understand what has happened to get to this point is patently absurd. You cannot get to this point in the nine months that the Labor government has been in power; it is not possible. It took us three years to get through the strategic assessment process. It took three years to get through the consultation process. It took three years to get to the point where we could introduce the bill into parliament on 25 November 2014. Just as it is impossible to get to that point in nine months, so it is impossible to address the concerns that UNESCO had in six months—

Mr Powell: Concerns that came from their mismanagement of the reef!

Mr SEENEY: Exactly! I was coming to that, member for Glass House, but thank you for pre-empting me. That too needs to be remembered in terms of history. Why did UNESCO become concerned? Why was UNESCO involved at all? Because the former Labor government launched into the construction of three LNG plants on Curtis Island in the port of Gladstone without any consideration of World Heritage values, without any consideration of marine park values and without telling anybody. We all know that the undue haste that was involved in establishing the LNG plants was repeated across the establishment of that whole coal seam gas industry. That is when UNESCO became involved and they started to express justifiable concern. What was the Labor government's response? Leo Zussino, the chair of the Gladstone Ports Corporation, wanted to shift the boundary of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area so that Gladstone was not in it. That was his suggestion; that is what he wanted to do. 'That will save us worrying about it.'

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SEENEY: Yes, he is the unofficial member for Gladstone. This guy here who sits in the House is a wooden puppet with a rubber stamp. Leo Zussino is the member for Gladstone. He was the one who wanted to address UNESCO's concern by shifting the boundary. When we came to power we said, 'No, we are not going to do that. We are going to work through this process with the federal government. We are going to do the hard yards.' And by gee, there were some hard yards! There were some long meetings involved and there was enormous effort put in by not just my ministerial colleagues, but by some departmental staff. I would love to give them the recognition they deserve, but the vindictive people who sit over there would only use that as an opportunity. Some of those individuals put their heart and soul into the strategic assessment and the public consultation process which were necessary to bring together all of the stakeholders through the ports strategy and the drawing up of the Ports Bill. Ours was a little different, and the member for Hinchinbrook has gone through those differences.

I believe that our planning processes were much stronger. The priority ports development areas that we proposed are much better planning instruments than the overlays currently proposed in this bill. There are a whole range of those sorts of details that will be lost in this debate, but it does not matter. What matters most is that we have in place the framework that is necessary to demonstrate to the world that every Queenslanders is protecting the Great Barrier Reef and that we have in place a legislative provision to ensure we can have the development that every Queenslanders needs at the same time as we protect the reef.