




Speech By  
**Mark Boothman**

**MEMBER FOR THEODORE**

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**ENVIRONMENTAL AND OTHER LEGISLATION (REVERSAL OF GREAT BARRIER REEF PROTECTION MEASURES) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (5.41 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Environmental and Other Legislation (Reversal of Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) Amendment Bill. I was a member of the State Development, Tourism, Innovation and Manufacturing Committee which reviewed the original Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. It was certainly a very interesting time going to Cairns, Townsville, Mackay and other areas to talk to farmers and hear about their concerns about the legislation. We all rely on our farmers to produce good quality food, but unfortunately there were some in our community who tried to say that farmers were environmental vandals, and that came from people from South-East Queensland.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Pause the clock. Member for Logan, just because you are in the background of the member for Theodore does not mean I cannot hear you. You are warned under the standing orders, member for Logan.

**Mr BOOTHMAN:** The problem is that there are many in our society who try to demonise farmers when farmers want to protect their asset, protect their soil and make their properties cost effective—

**Mrs Frecklington:** Including the avocado growers.

**Mr BOOTHMAN:**—including the avocado growers. They see their land as their biggest asset and they must protect their biggest asset. In my speech on the original bill in this chamber in 2019 I spoke about incentives for farmers to help farmers. I am very proud that the member for Bonney has brought forward some amendments that say that best management practice is something that we need to follow, because many of these best management practices are better than the actual regulation. When we were in Mackay I remember speaking to a canefarmer who took great pleasure taking his family out to the reef. He said, 'The last thing I want to do is destroy this reef.' All he wanted to do was be empowered to learn new skills and learn new ways and new techniques of farming, and this is what the member for Bonney is talking about. This is what he is pushing for. Farmers are not environmental vandals. Farmers—

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Mr BOOTHMAN:** I take the interjection from the member for Logan.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Logan, you are under a warning. You can leave the chamber for an hour.

*Whereupon the honourable member for Logan withdrew from the chamber at 5.45 pm.*

**Mr BOOTHMAN:** As I was saying, farmers do not want to spend unnecessary funds on their property when they do not need to when it comes to fertilising and protecting their soil. Learning best management practice is critically important for them to remain globally competitive. We are all part of a

global economy and we need to make sure that we empower our farmers and not persecute them. In the debate on the original bill I spoke about dredging that could be dumped on the Great Barrier Reef. That has not been done at the moment, but that legislation allowed that and that was never amended. That was one of my gravest concerns. Even the WWF mentioned it.

It is crucially important that we support the member for Bonney. Empowering our farmers to do best management practice is crucially important for them and for the reef because they enjoy the reef just as much as everybody else. We need our farmers to remain strong and competitive on a world stage. Given what is happening around the world with opening markets, we need to make sure that our farmers can supply an ever-increasing amount of goods for our communities and our increasing populations. I will leave my contribution at that, but I plead with the House to support the member for Bonney's amendments. These are the comments that I made in my speech on the original bill in terms of empowering farmers, because that is the way forward to making a difference and ensuring that the farming sector in Queensland remains incredibly strong.