



Matters of Public Interest

GLEN ELMES  
Member for Noosa

Hansard, 19 May 2009

---

### **Bribie Island, Erosion**

**Mr ELMES (Noosa--LNP) (12.20 pm):** I rise today to speak about the disgraceful state of the northern tip of Bribie Island. On Tuesday last week I visited this area with the member for Caloundra to gain firsthand knowledge of the erosion. Erosion is taking place on a huge scale on both sides of the island with some 50 metres being lost in the very recent past on the coastal side alone. To illustrate my point, I table a number of photos taken during my visit. Tabled paper: Photographs of beach at Bribie Island [ [225](#) ]. There are four points where the sea has flowed across the island. The vegetation there is now dead and during the next weather event the root systems to hold the ground together that were present before will not be there. There is a six-knot speed limit for boats in the passage and the channel runs hard up against the island. I observed that virtually no-one takes notice of the speed limit and boats regularly do up to 40 knots through this area, which intensifies the erosion.

On the ocean side there is little left of the dunes. In many locations the ground drops away behind the dunes. Once this is gone, there will be no protection to stop the break-up of northern Bribie Island. The sand loss has been estimated to be between 50,000 and 140,000 cubic metres per year. A beach nourishment campaign would cost between \$5 million and \$15 million and would additionally require a figure of somewhere between \$ million and \$1.5 million per year to assist in the protection of the island. If we do nothing, which is the EPA's preferred choice, a major new channel will form, probably opposite Golden Beach, which is low-lying land susceptible to flooding.

This would cost both taxpayers and the local council untold amounts of money to protect homeowners and the property. My advice is that the EPA has identified this distinct possibility and the dangers to the Caloundra community generally and has stated that a better solution may need to be investigated. No-one is suggesting that rock walls or groynes be built. I submit that sand be pumped onto what is left of the area to protect the dunes and assist Mother Nature. The locals agree and the EPA has also identified this as an option.

The government should take notice of locals, who have the best interests of Bribie at heart. I refer particularly to the Night Eyes organisation which is responsible for monitoring this section of the island. Aside from its other functions, it alone cleaned up 130,000 litres of rubbish last year. The members opposite may wish to bury their collective heads in the sands of Bribie Island and say 'do nothing'. In that case I am wondering what the government will do about the LEED light on the northern tip of Bribie Island which is central to the navigation system that allows ships to enter and leave the Port of Brisbane. This LEED light is supported by four pillars, each some 60 centimetres in diameter. I table photos of the LEED light in question. Tabled paper: Photographs of LEED lights at Bribie Island [ [226](#) ].

The LEED light is now just one metre from where the erosion ended in the last weather event. Twelve months ago it had a buffer of 50 metres. The government has four options and they are, firstly, to move the LEED light further into the island on the same line so that it continues to communicate with the one on the mainland. However, this is not possible because the land behind what is left of the dunal system is below sea level.

The second option is to relocate the LEED light altogether, which means relocating the LEED light on the mainland and the channel markers, costing vast sums. Another option, of course, is to do nothing and in the next weather event lose the LEED light altogether and shut down shipping into the Port of Brisbane.

Let me inform the House that the EPA has reconstructed the dunes once already on one section of the beach and has stated that it would delay the breakthrough of the ocean in this location for between one and two years. In the past we have allowed housing developments to be built in coastal areas that, with hindsight, should not have occurred. In Noosa a similar situation exists with erosion to the spit taking place on a large scale, with danger to the 30-year-old Noosa Sound development.

If Golden Beach and Noosa Sound did not exist I would not put forward this argument. We have interfered with nature's natural process and, unfortunately, we have no option other than to protect in the most sensitive way what we have built.

It is crucial that sand be pumped onto the area in front of the LEED light, we reconstruct and revegetate the dunes and we protect the infrastructure.

It is the only option, just as it is the only option in other locations identified to stop the break-up of the island and protect areas such as Golden Beach.

To do nothing would invite disaster.

---