



Speech by

Jann Stuckey

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

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CURRUMBIN ESTUARY, SAND SILTATION

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—LNP) (10.26 pm): The saga of sand siltation at Currumbin Estuary continues to pile up. Now some eight years since the Tweed sand bypass system commenced and after approximately that number of million cubic metres of sand has been pumped out, this Bligh Labor government arrogantly refuses to accept any responsibility for maintaining a safe passage through the mouth of this popular waterway.

During this time the sand has moved in a northerly drift at three times the normal rate, destroying baitfish reefs and surf breaks, including our famous Kirra, and now threatens the Alley at Currumbin. Despite the fact this pumping project, which has been blamed for creating the bulk of the problem, is a state government partnership between New South Wales and Queensland, minister after minister has fobbed off any obligation to fix it.

The government has had its head in the sand for years on end, using the excuse that this is not a navigable channel. Yet there is a maritime beacon sitting on the end of a groyne plus a Volunteer Marine Rescue building that is rostered around the clock with volunteers. Think of the revenue from boat registrations the government has been hoarding all this time. Pleas and tears of frustration from our VMR over several years have fallen on deaf ears. These dedicated individuals log up to 16,000 bar crossings every year and have witnessed too many near disasters to count. They genuinely fear loss of life will occur if the government does not step up to the plate and fix this problem soon.

Just over five years ago, a group under the guidance of Brad Smith, called Fix Currumbin Creek, was formed because of the terrible situation that the bar was in. As a result of intensive lobbying and the Gold Coast City Council's willingness to address the problems inside the creek mouth, we have managed to avoid the mouth completely blocking off with the help of annual and biannual dredging programs funded by council.

Requests in 2005 for an investment of \$340,000 by the state government to be added to the \$660,000 offered by the Gold Coast City Council for a research and development project to devise a method to move the sand regularly were ignored. Now three years later, we have an even more complex problem and our surfing groups, fishing groups and other recreational users have joined together to ask the state government to pull their head out of the sand and do something. An estuarine modelling study is urgently required to determine what would be the best way to maintain this picturesque and special waterway. It would have been completed by now if the government had agreed to the 2005 proposal.

Further north the Broadwater is choking with sand and the government is finally succumbing to public pressure and dredging sections of it. It is up to the state government to now do the same for Currumbin. Once again I ask the state government, on behalf of thousands of people in Currumbin and beyond who use this magnificent amenity, to face up to its responsibility. Premier Bligh brags about her congestion busters. Well, we want a bar buster in Currumbin.

Safety is being ignored by the government. There is also the economic aspect for fishermen who rely on it for their livelihood. And of course there are surfers, swimmers and kayakers, just to name a few of the water users.