

Senator SCULLION (Northern Territory—Deputy Leader of The Nationals) (11:48): Just briefly, I want to correct the record. There has been so much passion around the chamber today. Everybody has wanted to speak on this bill. Obviously, there will not be the opportunity to bring it to a vote. Senator Siewert, in regards to your amendment, it is terrific to see that you now have some conditionality for your support of our legislation. I accept that. That is a very heartening. I look forward to having some further deliberations with you on that matter. Sadly, it is very difficult to support an amendment that basically says, 'Senator Scullion, if you undertake to support our bill, when our legislation goes through then your legislation will in fact become law.' We have not seen your legislation. I have to say, Senator Siewert, that I am disappointed that you would paint the coalition as not being very focussed on ensuring that Aboriginal people, through land reform, can get a better deal. That is simply not the case.

Sadly, we will not have the opportunity to have a vote on this today. We have had some very interesting contributions, particularly from those opposite. I would like to move very quickly past the fences, the dams, the cows, the chooks and the sandpit, because they fundamentally have nothing to do with this legislation. This legislation intends to ensure that we have the same rights of application over land in a national park, for example, as we do over land in any other case. It is absolutely essential that we go back to providing consent mechanisms for every time any level of government deals with Aboriginal people. It is incumbent upon all of us. I understand the views of the other side, particularly those who come from the cape. I noticed that the North Queenslanders and other Queenslanders got a little bit more agitated than others, as I and my Territory counterparts often do. If we all had our druthers, we and those opposite would possibly be in a more balanced place regarding this issue than we are now. But I have to again say that I do not think that it is fair to characterise the views of the people of Cape York as divided so that there are somehow two views. That means that, if one person in a hundred has a different view, there are two views in Cape York. That is not fair. The Cape York Land Council, which represents the vast majority of the land in Cape York and the vast majority of the wild river declarations, had a vote and decided that this should not be supported.

Progress reported.