

**Legislative Council
5 May 2016 - UNCORRECTED**

Death of Mr John Creighton

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN (16:21 :41): The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party unequivocally supports the right of people to protest. Indeed, when we had the debate on the changes to the Inclosed Lands, Crimes and Law Enforcement Legislation Amendment (Interference) Bill 2016 some people locked themselves to the front gate of Parliament House. During that debate I raised the death of logging worker John Creighton at Whian Whian as one of the reasons why the Shooters and Fishers Party, as it was known at that time, was supporting the legislation. His death came about whilst he was acting as a lookout for the safety of protesters illegally trespassing on a logging site and he was tragically struck by a falling tree branch.

At the time of that debate members of The Greens were calling me a "liar" and a "grub" from across the Chamber for raising this example. I did not take points of order—I have broad shoulders. Mr Hans Lovejoy of the *Byron Shire Echo* misled his readers in the 30 March edition of his paper when he said there was no correlation between the protesters and Mr Creighton's tragic passing. Today I will correct the record with the facts.

I have the Coroner's report from the death of Mr Creighton, and I have received permission from his widow, Barbara, to read the relevant part of it onto the record in this place. She is particularly upset at the Coroner's handling of the matter, that the Coroner's report has not been made public, and that the protesters involved have not had to face consequences for their actions—consequences that Barbara has had to live with. I hope to right some of these wrongs today. The report is dated 17 February 2015 and its file number is 2013/350429. Coroner J. A. Linden said:

I find that the deceased died at about 7:45 pm on 10 October 2013 at Southport as a result of a traumatic head injury sustained when struck by a falling tree branch during the course of his employment at Whian Whian.

Having made the formal findings, I make the following comments in respect of the matter.

The necessity of the deceased being on the site at all related directly and solely to the presence of unlawful protesters. The logging contractor was acting lawfully pursuant to licences to fell timber on the property. The protesters were conducting guerrilla tactics part of which involved an activity described as a "black wallaby". This action placed the protesters in the vicinity of trees being felled thereby endangering their lives.

The deceased was brought on the site as a lookout for such activity to ensure the safety of all persons.

Following the tragic accident that saw the death of Mr Creighton some unlawful protesters were heard by police and workers to comment that it was "Karma". This is of course a cynical and disgusting excuse and/or justification for their unlawful activities which led to his death.



SouthEastTIMBERassociation

At a conference with the deceased's widow and family, concern was expressed at the lack of communication between police and the family. I recommend that within the Local Area Command, the informant be designated the responsibility of liaising with family about the progress of Coronial matters.

I am satisfied that an inquest will not take this matter any further and pursuant to section 25 of the Coroner's Act 2009 I dispense with holding an inquest.

The content of that report and the assertions made by people following my speech disgust me. Tragedies such as Mr Creighton's death must be prevented. Not only was he doing the right thing but also he was selflessly looking out for the safety of others. He was going about his daily work. He was just another worker doing the job he was supposed to do. The Greens and their supporters should think twice before launching their next campaign of fear and misinformation; real people are affected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIR (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): The question is that this House do now adjourn.

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Hansard/Pages/HansardResult.aspx#/docid/HANSARD-1820781676-67910>



John Creighton

Press coverage following John's death can be found at:

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw/greens-protest-killed-my-father-russell-creighton-says/story-fni0cx12-1226755308954>

