

~~health and how do we turn 'me' into 'we' and all those issues that were raised at the summit on the Queensland Plan and we gave an opportunity for that great cross-section of Gold Coasters to contribute to the Queensland Plan.~~

~~It is very important that the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, for instance, took it on board and put a good spread in the paper to promote it. The editor of the *Gold Coast Bulletin* understands that this is about Queensland being a better place to live over the next 30 years. It is not a place to score cheap political points. It is a genuine effort in terms of consultation just as it is going out into the schools for input and feedback from the schoolchildren. What better place and what more important place than a school environment for children to have their say about they want their future to be. I am sure teachers will deal with it in the impartial manner that is expected of them through the school system. There will be no political tint on this whatsoever.~~

~~I implore all members to take on board the Queensland Plan. The minister, Andrew Powell, in charge of promoting the Queensland Plan has done a wonderful job. I congratulate him. I certainly implore all members of the House right across the board to take every opportunity to promote the Queensland Plan and to give opportunities for the Queensland public to have input into this very, very important project.~~

~~**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! The time for matters of public interest has expired.~~

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<AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction



Hon. JJ McVEIGH (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (11.58 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act 1966, the Agricultural Standards Act 1994, the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001, the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008, the Forestry Act 1959, the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002, the Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994 and the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1936 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Agriculture and Forestry Legislation Amendment Bill 2013.

Tabled paper: Agriculture and Forestry Legislation Amendment Bill 2013, explanatory notes.

I am very pleased to introduce the Agriculture and Forestry Legislation Amendment Bill 2013. This bill provided for amendments to eight acts within my portfolio jurisdiction. The amendments in this bill are being made to ensure the effective administration and operation of legislation; implement the outcomes of legislative reviews and national proposed arrangements; and reduce regulatory burden and red tape.

The major amendments being made by the bill are to biosecurity related legislation and particularly to the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1936. I have approved that a review of the Veterinary Surgeons Act be undertaken. However, pending the outcome of that review there are two significant issues that need to be addressed now. These are, firstly, to provide for Queensland's participation in the National Recognition of Veterinary Registration (NRVR) scheme and, secondly, to enhance the state's biosecurity response capability.

Separate regulatory systems for veterinary registration in each state and territory hinder the mobility of veterinarians within Australia and inconvenience clients with interstate or national interests as well as those requiring particular veterinary expertise only available outside their own state or territory.

Under the NRVR scheme, Queensland resident veterinary surgeons with registration in this state will be able to also practise in another state or territory as their qualifications will be automatically recognised. They will no longer have to go through a separate registration process in another state or territory as they will in effect be 'deemed' to be registered in all other Australian jurisdictions. A veterinary surgeon will only have to pay a registration fee in their home state. No further fees will be required to be paid to practise interstate because the scheme acknowledges practising rights in all other jurisdictions.

By virtue of these amendments, veterinary registration will be 'mirrored' in other jurisdictions, with any special conditions or limitations imposed by the home state also applying in the other jurisdictions. Conversely, in terms of compliance action, if a veterinary registration board suspends or

cancels a veterinary surgeon's registration, that suspension or cancellation will automatically affect the registration status in other jurisdictions.

The amendments proposed in regard to our biosecurity response capability redress a gap identified during a previous Hendra virus outbreak. Subsequent to that event, criticism was raised for a failing by the department to advise veterinarians promptly of the risks of Hendra virus infection from horses showing no clinical signs of illness.

This issue was noted in *The Hendra virus report* prepared by the Queensland Ombudsman in 2011 which recommended that critical information regarding Hendra virus be distributed to private veterinarians in a timely and comprehensive way. This issue has wider application than just Hendra virus and applies to any biosecurity event or disease, the distribution of information about which is time critical.

Currently, the Veterinary Surgeons Act does not require comprehensive contact and out-of-hours details of veterinary surgeons or specialists to be provided. Whilst postal addresses are available and maintained by the Veterinary Surgeons Board, these are wholly unsuitable for the dissemination of urgent information during a biosecurity event. The proposed amendments will provide that, as a condition of registration in Queensland, veterinary surgeons will be required to provide a range of contact details to enable contact with them at all times, including outside normal working hours.

The amendments provide for Biosecurity Queensland, via the department chief executive, to access this contact information for use in biosecurity responses and also for chief executives of other government departments to request this information so that they may convey important relevant information to veterinary surgeons to appropriately deal with a biosecurity incident. For example, this would include Queensland Health, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General in regard to workplace health and safety matters, or the Department of Community Safety in regard to emergency management matters.

To safeguard veterinary surgeons' privacy, the amendments ensure that access to the additional contact details provided to the Veterinary Surgeons Board will be strictly limited. Departments will only be able to request emergency contact details from the board for purposes involved with the controlling, eradicating or preventing the spread of an exotic disease, a declared pest or a disease. The additional details will not be displayed on any publicly accessible registry maintained by the board or publicly accessible via any Biosecurity Queensland website.

The bill also amends the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008 to remove state-wide cat registration requirements and empower local governments to decide whether the costs and benefits of cat registration warrant its continuation in their area. However, state-wide microchipping requirements will be maintained, ensuring that cat reunification outcomes are not affected.

Existing state-wide cat registration requirements impose red tape on local government and cat owners, but for many local government areas cat registration does not provide benefits in addition to microchipping. The bill demonstrates that the government is acting on its commitment to empower local governments and cut unnecessary bureaucratic requirements as articulated in our election policy document *Empowering local communities*.

Additional amendments are proposed to the animal management act to reduce red tape and the legislative burden on local government by streamlining review processes that occur before a local government can destroy a dog. This amendment will provide for a local government to make a regulated dog declaration and a destruction order concurrently. This will streamline the review process by enabling the declaration and the order to be considered through a single internal review and a single external review and result in reduced costs to councils and ultimately ratepayers.

The Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 is being amended to increase the maximum penalties for animal cruelty offences from 1,000 penalty units or two years imprisonment to 2,000 penalty units or three years imprisonment. This amendment will implement the government's election commitment to empower the courts to impose penalties on animal cruelty offenders that act as both a punishment and a deterrent to ensure offending behaviour does not go untreated.

This amendment is in response to concerns from the public and animal welfare organisations over the relatively low level of penalties applied by the courts to those who perpetrate animal cruelty. These amendments are intended to signal to the community and the courts that animal cruelty is a serious matter to which serious penalties should apply.

The amendments to the Agricultural Standards Act 1994 will provide inspectors with the power to enter a vehicle to undertake routine sampling of stock feed. This will assist in determining if feed is contaminated with restricted animal material.

Currently, the act does not satisfy a national agreement to establish a risk based compliance inspection program as part of the national ruminant feed ban. Under the ban the feeding of restricted animal material to ruminants such as cattle, sheep and goats is prohibited in order to prevent the spread of transmissible diseases such as 'mad cow disease'.

The act currently lacks adequate powers of entry to enable sufficient auditing and testing of stock feed. Without the proposed amendments, routine sampling of stock feed can only be conducted on a voluntary basis. This compromises the integrity of the national ruminant feed ban and jeopardises our livestock industries and favourable livestock trading status. The amendments in the bill will bring Queensland into line with other jurisdictions and protect our livestock and export industries.

The bill also amends the Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act 1966 to abolish the redundant Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Board and to transfer the functions of the former board to the chief executive of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

The amendments proposed to the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002 are simple in that they will replace the current requirement for separate state pest management strategies for animals and plants with a single state pest management strategy covering both animals and pests.

The Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994 establishes QRAA to administer approved assistance schemes. The act has been reviewed in terms of its scope and the adequacy of QRAA's functions, powers, governance and administration arrangements. In response to the review outcomes, the bill amends the act to enhance QRAA's operational efficiency by allowing it to also administer parts of interstate schemes, streamline the appointment of, and delegation of powers by, the QRAA chief executive officer and clarify the requirements for future review of the act. To ensure that its provisions remain current and appropriate, the bill also provides that the act is to be reviewed at least once every 10 years.

Finally, the Forestry Act 1959 is being amended to omit spent provisions dealing with the abolition of the former Timber Research and Development Advisory Council which took place over a decade ago. In 2000 the council's assets and liabilities were transferred to Timber Queensland Ltd, which is a non-statutory, industry owned company. It is no longer necessary to retain these provisions in the act. I commend the bill to the House.>

First Reading

Hon. JJ McVEIGH (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (12.10 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.


Referral to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee.

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<NATURE CONSERVATION (PROTECTED PLANTS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (12.10 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Nature Conservation Act 1992, the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 and the Vegetation Management Act 1999 for particular purposes. I table the bill