



Lot 65 Musgrave St  
Po Box 90  
Burketown Qld 4830  
P: (07) 4745 5100  
F: (07) 4745 5181

E: [mayor.camp@burke.qld.gov.au](mailto:mayor.camp@burke.qld.gov.au)  
[www.burke.qld.gov.au](http://www.burke.qld.gov.au)  
ABN: 14 130 592 645

---

# OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

To Whom It May Concern

**RE: SAFE WATERWAYS BILL 2017 PROPOSED BY MEMBER FOR MT ISA, ROBBIE KATTER**

Burke Shire Council is a remote local government area located in North West Queensland, adjacent to both the Northern Territory border and the waters of the Gulf of Carpentaria. It has high natural values and is home to many riverine and estuarine species including healthy populations of both species of crocodile resident in Australia. Many of the activities undertaken by people in our Shire for business, public service or personal reasons involve interaction with our waterways. There is significant opportunity for regular interaction between people undertaking water based activities and crocodile populations.

Crocodiles are prevalent in our waterways and interaction is inevitable. Anecdotal evidence from long-time residents highlights a definite increase in crocodile numbers. Burke Shire Council is of the belief that numbers do need to be managed in a responsible manner in order to maintain the safety of water users. It needs to be done in such a way that it creates economic opportunity for local indigenous businesses

Nearly every dwelling in Burketown has a boat in its yard as locals are also keen anglers. During the annual Wet season road access is limited or impossible creating interruption to food resupplies, therefore residents rely upon fish to regularly meet their protein needs. Safe access to waterways is imperative to ensuring residents are able to harvest sufficient seafoods to meet the dietary requirements for themselves and their families.

Many Burke Shire businesses rely upon tourism – and many of those tourists are attracted to our Shire due to the abundant recreational fishing opportunities our coastal location offers. Tourists also come to the area in order to observe the abundant flora and fauna, including crocodiles. Therefore, responsible control of crocodilian numbers is imperative: to ensure safety of tourists upon the water regardless of their purpose in doing so and sustaining a diverse range of tourism attractions.

The other mainstay of the Shire's economy is extensive grazing. Graziers along the northern waterways are all too familiar with stock loss due to crocodile attack. Many of these properties also rely upon water extracted from these waterways for their cattle. Checking these pumps and maintaining correct positioning in the water is made riskier due to the increased presence of crocs.

As is evident in the human population, not all crocodiles are "rogue" nor exhibit aggressive behaviour. Therefore, a balance must be struck to ensure the populations of these apex predators, a valuable part of the food chain, are sustained whilst protecting those whose actions or means of earning a living, directly or indirectly, requires utilising crocodile habitats.



Lot 65 Musgrave St

Po Box 90

Burketown Qld 4830

P: (07) 4745 5100

F: (07) 4745 5181

E: [mayor.camp@burke.qld.gov.au](mailto:mayor.camp@burke.qld.gov.au)

[www.burke.qld.gov.au](http://www.burke.qld.gov.au)

ABN: 14 130 592 645

---

This Bill offers a mechanism to do just that. It seeks to protect all species, including humankind, and target specific reptiles exhibiting behaviour contrary to that protection. Potentially, it creates economic opportunity for innovative indigenous business development through the controlled harvesting of these specific reptiles and of eggs and through farming. A board is proposed to evaluate and determine terms and conditions related to harvesting and to ensure those terms and conditions meet emerging needs and trends in populations and threat levels.

Crocodiles are a valued and valuable natural resource that could contribute much to diverse business opportunities, including tourism, farming and indigenous businesses as well as balancing the ecosystem, if managed sensibly and sensitively against the need to protect and preserve life. Burke Shire Council is happy to support this Bill due to aforementioned reasons and recommends its adoption.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ernie Camp'.

Cr Ernie Camp