



ECONOMICS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Members present:

Mr LP Power MP—Chair
Mr RA Stevens MP
Mr MJ Crandon MP
Mrs MF McMahon MP
Mr A Tantari MP

Staff present:

Ms L Manderson—Committee Secretary

PUBLIC FORUM—INQUIRY INTO THE EMBLEMS OF QUEENSLAND AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023 AND AN INQUIRY INTO PREHISTORIC DINOSAUR AND PALEO TOURISM IN OUTBACK QUEENSLAND

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday, 5 October 2023

Mttaburra

THURSDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2023

The committee met at 10.06 am.

CHAIR: I declare open the public forum of the Economics and Governance Committee's inquiry into the Emblems of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 and the committee's parallel inquiry into prehistoric, dinosaur and paleo tourism in Outback Queensland. I would like to respectfully acknowledge the Iningai and Bidjara people on whose land we meet today. I also recognise that today we are meeting in the Muttaborra Memorial Hall and I acknowledge those who have gone before us who served our country. I was particularly inspired by the community fundraising flag; the World War II history is pretty special. I would also like to recognise Doug, who served our country in not one but two overseas conflicts. It is part of the proud history of this community and Doug and the Langdon family.

My name is Linus Power. I am the member for Logan and chair of the committee. Other committee members here with me today are: Mr Ray Stevens, the member for Mermaid Beach and deputy chair; Mr Michael Crandon, the member for Coomera; Ms Melissa McMahon, the member for Macalister; and Mr Adrian Tantari, the member for Hervey Bay. Mr Dan Purdie, the member for Ninderry, is an apology as he was unable to come on the trip today. He is really missing out.

The purpose of today's forum is to enable the committee to explore with stakeholders the establishment of a new state fossil emblem and also to give us an understanding to take back to the parliament of the broader trends, issues and opportunities for prehistoric, dinosaur and paleo tourism in Outback Queensland. The forum is an official proceeding of the Queensland parliament and is subject to the Queensland parliament's standing rules and orders. While the forum is open to the public to watch, only the committee and registered witnesses may participate in the hearing. As I previously mentioned, unlike some forums we are happy if anyone else wants to come forward and speak. Please just see Lucy to register. The proceedings are being recorded, so your words will be recorded in *Hansard*. Those participating today may also be filmed or photographed, and images may appear on the parliament's website or social media pages or in the media. Before we commence, I would ask everyone to switch mobile phones to silent mode.

DILLON, Mr Sean, Mayor, Barcaldine Regional Council

LANGDON, Ms Pearl, Private capacity

ROBINSON, Ms Kerry, Secretary and Treasurer, Muttaborra Community Development Association

SPENCE, Mr Bill, Private capacity

SPENCE, Mr Tyrel, Private capacity

WILLIAMS, Mr Michael, Principal Cultural Heritage Officer, GBA Consulting Engineers

CHAIR: Mayor, you gave us some very useful information yesterday. On reflection, is there anything you want to add?

Mr Dillon: At the outset, I formally welcome the Queensland parliament, through the extension of its Economics and Governance Committee, to Muttaborra. It is truly special for any community to play host to the Queensland parliament, either in its entirety or through the extension of its committees. We very much thank each of the committee members, secretariat and Hansard for taking time out of their very busy schedules to ensure that this community's voice is heard directly from within the community. It is important, especially in relation to issues that deal with emblems and symbols. This is not just a symbolic gesture; it is a real gesture. Rather than just a flying visit to visit and formally record the submissions from within the community, the committee's visit is extremely valuable and shows the respect that you individually and collectively as a committee—and as the government and members of the opposition—have for the process.

Public Forum—Inquiry into the Emblems of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill
2023 and an inquiry into prehistoric dinosaur and paleo tourism in Outback Queensland

Yesterday's inquiry was revealing. It underlined the holistic support that rural and Outback Queensland and its tourism operators have for the establishment of a fossil emblem in Queensland. Whilst there was at times a little parochial commentary about other individual dinosaurs that may have been chosen, I think I detected and received clear support for the proposition that the Muttaborrasaurus become the emblem in the fullness of time as the legislative process is completed. It is very important for this community.

As I said yesterday, this community is not purely built on paleo tourism. Even Winton, the 'Dinosaur Capital of Australia', is probably not built purely on that. There are so many strings to outback tourism, including nature tourism, cultural tourism, and even the pre-existence of other activities, including hopefully what we will see here in Muttaborra at the end of this public forum. The way of life of early settlers in this area and the trials and tribulations early workers had in securing workers' rights all form part of the mix that is outback tourism, and to be successful it needs a good mix.

A community of Muttaborra's size on any given day in the peak tourist season can see a doubling of its population, with anywhere from 40 to 60 vans paying to be here and countless others in freedom parks, rest areas or places like that. Muttaborra, unlike so many other towns in the west, sees a high rebound rate in that there are a number of visitors to this community who visit year after year from southern states. That means two things: the community here is obviously very warm and receives them well. Another thing that happens is a slight change in the product. Even though a lot of the product in the tourism space in Muttaborra is hard infrastructure, be it the Cassimatis Museum, the Dr Arratta museum—now the Muttaborrasaurus Interpretation Centre—or the union hall, there are slight differences every year. Then there is the soft infrastructure that attaches to that for community events which value-add exponentially to that. Paleo tourism for communities such as Muttaborra and others is an integral part, but it should not be the pure focus. For it to succeed, so many other elements of what makes up the Outback Queensland way of life needs to be immortalised and supported.

If I was to emphasise anything, it would be that physical tourism infrastructure such as the road network, the extension of sealed corridors and the maintenance of already sealed corridors is really important for the drive market. There are very few private charters used at the Muttaborra airstrip, so the drive destination—which is what Muttaborra is—requires a resilient and well-constructed road network. The sealing of Aramac-Torrens Creek Road has been a major positive step in that direction. It now allows fully sealed access on the Mount Isa to Townsville corridor as well as, obviously, the sealing of the Cramsie-Muttaborra Road, which is a terrific boost not only for locals but people wishing to visit from the south, ensuring that can happen in a much safer and smoother manner.

In closing, I did comment a lot more about other issues. I am happy to take any further questions, Mr Chair. Once again, on behalf of the Barcardine Regional Council and the community, thank you so much to the committee for taking the time in what has been an expedited process in terms of committee time to make sure you visit both Winton and Muttaborra—two very important destinations for paleo tourism in Western Queensland.

CHAIR: We would not have missed this for quids. When this trip came up we really wanted to get out to Western Queensland. We have all visited lots of places out here and we love it. We love the warmth of the people and we love its many facets, so it is a pleasure for us to be out here. Mr Spence, would you like to make an opening statement?

Mr T Spence: I would like to welcome you to Muttaborra. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to appear before you today. I hope that more community members give their views as well. I have a couple of things I want to say. The Muttaborrasaurus emblem is a big honour for this community and unique. It is one of two state emblems that is local to a very specific spot in Queensland. As a younger person in the community, I think this has great potential to help put us on the map for tourism and develop more tourism. I would like to see the Muttaborra community, especially the Muttaborra Community Development Association, involved around the designing and promotion of that if it is possible, even the school. We have a very small school. Let the schoolchildren have input because they are the future of our community.

In relation to tourism, in the last couple of years due to COVID we have seen a lot of tourism travel to Outback Queensland. We have seen our tourist season get bigger and bigger every year. With that comes the need for more accommodation. At the moment most of our tourism are caravanners, so the expansion of those facilities would be great. There are a lot more families starting to travel now on their holidays, especially in the middle of the year. I did a recent trip to New South Wales and was very warmly welcomed into a lot of communities with the facilities they have for families in their parks and playgrounds. I know that in Western Queensland all of the little communities Muttaborra

lack that because the youth population is not there. As Mayor Dillon said, the road network certainly plays a massive part in getting tourists out here, not just to Muttaborra but all of our little communities. Bitumen, a sealed network—certainly during the wet—would allow tourism to continue and start to extend the tourist season to 365 days of the year rather than just the middle, dry period of the year. Of course, with that comes exposure to car accidents, fire and all of the things that follow massive traffic and the transportation of people. In most of the smaller rural communities in Western Queensland the fire service and SES are all volunteers. Only the larger centres have auxiliaries, so that is another thing to take into account with increased tourism.

At the moment they have the Dinosaur Trail: Winton, Richmond, Hughenden. It would be absolutely fantastic to see that extended to incorporate Muttaborra, Isisford and some of the other smaller communities in the south that have dinosaurs in their communities and link it all up and make it a decent trail.

Mr STEVENS: Congratulations on supporting this hearing as well as you have. It is very impressive for us. We have done hearings in relation to other issues in other areas where we have been lucky to get one or two people turn up. Mayor Dillon, thank you for your comprehensive discussions in relation to the Muttaborrasaurus yesterday and paleo tourism generally. Congratulations on what you have done here. You have shown us a brilliant piece of architectural work in the interpretive centre next door. We hope to see it continue for Muttaborra. Can you also tell me about where you are heading for the future for tourism with your caravan parks? A lot of the people I know from the Gold Coast, the grey nomads, put the trailer on and head off. Accommodation is obviously an important part of tourism in the area. I notice the state government has made a funding commitment. How is that caravan park progressing?

Mr Dillon: Council established the two existing caravan parks that are already in evidence. If I look locally at both Aramac and Muttaborra, there are existing powered caravan park sites in evidence. They were very well maintained but quite small, especially the one here in Muttaborra. It still is the more popular destination because it is fully supported with facilities, including power. In both of these two communities and also in the community of Jericho the council established a freedom of choice park. They are not powered sites, but there is a much broader expanse of land available. They are also located more outside of the town limit so they are not quite wedged in as tightly.

That had a multistaged approach. The first stage was to see it established and then there was to be central facilities. The local Community Development Association lodged an application to see a toilet and shower facility included. They were unsuccessful in their most recent application, but council will fully support that application going forward again, obviously including the maintenance and cleaning of that facility before turning up to see that installed. They are small steps. Notwithstanding what Mr Spence said before about needing enhanced accommodation for non self-contained, certainly for the existing self-contained the small steps are what make a difference. The introduction of an ablution block would be a marked improvement locally to the freedom of choice park.

Improved telecommunications are another thing council has been lobbying extremely hard for. Unfortunately, the Telstra network here is very sensitive to power issues, and as a result of some prolonged PR related issues we have been without any outgoing communication for substantial periods of time in recent years. Some of those issues have been addressed by the upgrading of some infrastructure from Telstra's and Ergon's perspective; however, the issue still remains that when people are away from home, away from family and loved ones, they like to maintain continuity of contact. Of course, the people who live here need that every day.

From a tourism perspective, which is the question you asked, seeking to ensure more permanency around outgoing and incoming telecommunications or digital communications generally forms part of what we are trying to do in that space. The original planned wi-fi for those centres was put on hold because of, in this community's case, the lack of suitable hardware to support bulk wi-fi on the existing 4G network. There are still solutions being sought, but nothing at this stage is apparently obvious in that space.

Mr STEVENS: Tyrel, thank you for your presentation today as well, which was excellent. We can see that you are a very community-minded person. You mentioned that in the triangle you would like to see—which is the famous marketing part of it—Muttaborra incorporated somehow, which makes it a little tricky for a triangle. I know that Ms Langdon might find it a little bit time-consuming in getting into this legislation to officially make the Muttaborrasaurus our state emblem. It will last forever. There is a lot of legislation we do in parliament that comes and goes and we think it is important at the time, but making an emblem lasts forever. It is a wonderful thing that you—and the committee—are witnessing the Muttaborrasaurus enshrined as Queensland's emblem. To be fair, the 'member Muttaborra

for Richmond' came out as questioning the Muttaborrasaurus, but I am now totally convinced it is the right decision and I will be supporting it 100 per cent. From your perspective, how are we going to change the marketing to incorporate our state emblem in future paleo tourism in this area?

Mr T Spence: That is an excellent question. I do not have an answer to it. It is not just incorporating Muttaborra; it is incorporating Isisford and those other places as well which are certainly lesser known. We are very lucky in Muttaborra because we are greatly known. That has been very evident with the support we got for the Muttaborrasaurus. I do not have an answer to how we incorporate ourselves and those other smaller communities into that. I know the triangle is very tightly held, and congratulations to them for the work they have done on that. I do not want to take away from what they have created. It is certainly great tourism for Western Queensland and that area. I just feel that, to get the full experience of all the dinosaurs and history around what we have to offer in Queensland, smaller communities like Muttaborra, Isisford, Quilpie and others also need to be incorporated into it in some way or another.

Mr STEVENS: Sean, is there an issue about changing the triangle to the wider description that Tyrel is perhaps suggesting to include other areas?

Mr Dillon: No, I do not believe there is an issue. It may not even involve changing the triangle. It may mean value-adding to stops along the route. For example, if I can pick on paleo tourism, it is education based. It need not all be exclusively, but it can be a component. Yesterday in Winton we witnessed a wonderful facility that has been built by a school to house a large number of schoolchildren. As you discovered today, a trip from Winton to Muttaborra is not that onerous. The road network is sealed all the way via Longreach and certainly even though it is unsealed via Morella it is not a bad road. In terms of the ability for people to visit Muttaborra from other destinations, obviously it would be my council's preference—and no doubt the community's—for significant overnight stays to be attached. There could be a hybrid where we could see coaches filled with schoolchildren who are emanating from another centre—be it Barcaldine through the Workers Heritage Centre school location, whether it be Longreach through a multiple number of overnight stays, or from Winton—we could value-add to the triangle by experiencing the Muttaborrasaurus in its home location and then witnessing all other manner of paleo tourism in and around Winton, Hughenden and Richmond. Any one of those three points of the existing triangle can be branched out or expanded upon.

I think that directly trying to compete and break up existing tourism products can breed a sense of animosity. That is not where outback tourism needs to go because, let's face it, we are competing with the Great Barrier Reef tourism market. Let's be real; they are not always symbiotic. The people who go snorkelling off the Great Barrier Reef are not necessarily the same people in every instance who wish to experience outback tourism. To me, the possibility of expanding the triangle need not change the shape; it is changing what happens, branching off each point. Yesterday the mayor of Flinders said that Hughenden has such wonderful—not just the town of Hughenden—national park access in and around that is obviously hub and spoke, so the paleo trail could undertake exactly the same thing for the express benefit of Muttaborra in that respect.

CHAIR: Just building on that, we heard yesterday about the dinosaur collective, which is new to me at least. Muttaborra is a member of that, it is my understanding, along with Eromanga, Richmond and Hughenden. Is that a useful group? How is that working and how has that been promoting the triangle plus tourism, or whatever we want to call it?

Mr Dillon: When the Premier and minister announced that collective it certainly was seen as a boost and shot in the arm to collaboration around paleo tourism. It provided very clear direction to Tourism Queensland as to how to product and brand. The unique issue around that is that the Muttaborrasaurus is also claimed or in evidence in other areas, especially Hughenden. The inclusion of the smallest of our communities in what is effectively one town council has proved to be challenging in that respect in terms of actual inclusion, but it is not through the fault or the intent of either the Premier or the minister in trying to ensure that the collective was picking up broader tourism opportunities within the region. I think that was the catalyst and it still has not properly manifested. This decision, should the parliament see fit to legislate the emblem, will probably crystallise that a little more clearly. If I may be so forward as to suggest that, with the hearing in Winton and the Barcaldine Regional Council and community's presence here today, that grouping of three probably now starts to put the foot in the door physically and then metaphorically moving forward. Without there having to be adversity involved, I think this gives us the opportunity—through this piece of legislation, should it be enacted—to reach the fullness of the Premier and minister's intent in that respect.

Mr CRANDON: Sean, you were talking a minute ago about a toilet block that you would like to see arrive, which makes a lot of sense to me. I have heard some horror stories about the cost of toilet blocks down around my patch. Do you have any idea of the cost involved in putting it in? You were saying, if I remember correctly and I understood you correctly, that you guys are happy to do the ongoing maintenance and what have you, but the issue was putting the structure in place. What sorts of dollars are we talking?

Mr Dillon: Mr Crandon, I will have to defer to another member in the room, perhaps even Mr Spence. The Muttaborra Community Development Association is a very proactive not-for-profit association/community group and they have been instrumental in not only the product development for centres such as the Muttaborrasaurus Interpretation Centre but also most of the other tourist attractions in town. This was an idea spawned from them, so they may have the costings and certainly people in the room do, wherever Kerry is.

CHAIR: It must be the person in the far back corner who keeps looking up.

Mr CRANDON: We are used to this at estimates: there is somebody up in the back who knows the answer.

Ms Robinson: I put in a grant for \$65,000. That was to get it to Muttaborra. I put in a grant in to the gambling fund for \$100,000. We were unsuccessful, but \$65,000 of that was for the toilet block to be brought to Muttaborra and erected and council was going to put \$20,000 on top of that to plumb it into the sewerage and then they would maintain it, and that was just for a disability shower, toilet and handbasin. That was just for one thing, not three.

Mr CRANDON: But adequate for your needs?

Ms Robinson: We thought that was, because most people who come to Freedom Park are all self-contained. They do not need power or anything, but we were thinking of the other stage as well to try and have events up there, because so many people are coming now with their little canoes, kayaks and things like that and they are using it, so we were going to utilise it for events as well for our community but we did not have toilets there. It has a great fire pit and it has great water and everything up there, but we just did not have any facilities there to make it better.

Mr CRANDON: Thanks for that. That sort of feeds into the broader inquiry that the committee is doing around paleo tourism more broadly in terms of the add-ons, and you were making the point yesterday about it not just being about dinosaurs but about the broader delivery, so thank you. I appreciate that. In recent conversations with Telstra I have heard that there is a convergence occurring between the mobile network and satellites for virtually all of us using a mobile phone. Have you made any inquiries in that regard as to how far away that is?

CHAIR: My evidence is not on the road here, but go on.

Mr Dillon: The advice Telstra have got is that they are entering into agreement. They are still under a universal service obligation with the federal government to provide phone connectivity in all communities and the two communities that are in their line of sight to change to satellite technology—there are multiple but the two in this council area—are Jericho and Muttaborra where they will enter into an arrangement with Starlink to provide low-earth orbit satellite connectivity. The point of connectivity is the low-earth orbit satellite to Telstra hardware and then distributed on the ground. I think the piece that you are referring to is the more holistic piece where wherever we are with a handset that has the capacity to communicate directly to an LEO, and that is still somewhat futuristic. However, there is certainly some real benefit provided. The Starlink service is deemed as corporately reliable. There is some real benefit towards that satellite connection in terms of longevity of service as opposed to a scratchy point-to-point 3G/4G where it does not reconnect to the fibre optic until it gets back to Barcaldine, so it is boosted through a series of towers, all of which are powered by batteries, so you only need one failure in any one of the chain—it may not be here; it could be three towers further to the east—and the whole phone network goes down.

Mr CRANDON: For the broader tourist market for Western Queensland, I think it is important. People are becoming more and more reliant on these things and it is more and more important for us to make sure that we get that delivery of those mobile networks and the reliability of those mobile networks, as you mentioned earlier. When you have a breakdown, nobody can talk to anybody.

Mr Dillon: That is correct. I think there is unfortunately a predisposition towards the fact that mobile phone usage and black spots and so on are purely an aspect of road safety. It is a matter of livability. It is a matter of wanting to stay in a community because I can FaceTime my family from here to Melbourne or I can upload to Instagram, or whatever my preferred social media platform is, my holiday blog to date. We are not talking about people who do not use these anymore; there are

increasing numbers of tourists who are very digitally connected and digitally tech savvy. They will not tolerate communities where they cannot have some degree of certainty around that. Muttaborra is not without that; do not get me wrong. I would not like for the broader world to think that Muttaborra is that far off the beaten grid that you are still using the party line. We are not that archaic, but if these communities are to experience a real growth that is an impediment where you have intermittent phone and power service. Those are the types of hard infrastructure that we would need to see resolved as issues for the region and specifically for the community to blossom.

Mrs McMAHON: Just building on that question about connectivity and the next generation of tourists, we did hear yesterday specifically tourist numbers in relation to age groups and cohorts, and the grey nomads do make up a large percentage. Given the future of tourism, which is what we really want to set up Outback Queensland for, and the younger demographic and the need for connectivity—whether it is FaceTiming kids or something like that—I have noticed since I have been here with Vodafone that I do not have any connectivity whatsoever and so I know that I might not travel out here with my young kids and family and that kind of thing when I have no ability to call out. In terms of how far away that reliable connectivity is for places like Muttaborra to make sure it is a destination that is not excluded because of the lack of connectivity—

CHAIR: That being said, Vodafone will not do Park Ridge Road in my electorate.

Mrs McMAHON: Assuming you want to get city folk out here, they are probably not going to change their network just to come out here on a holiday.

Mr Dillon: The reality is that towns on the Capricorn Highway are now pretty well connected with a relatively diverse range of service providers, and that includes the Landsborough link, so Longreach to Rockhampton is pretty good—the communities, that is. I am not talking about mobile coverage but the access to different covers. There is also a high prevalence of NBN connectivity through fibre in those communities, so that provides once again diverse access in terms of even non-service provider but fixed wi-fi connectivity. I think that the federal government's decision to not allow or to not instruct telco providers to allow the sharing of services across the same hardware is a big impediment to that. It is the same bandwidth; it is just a different service provider, and they are federally funded towers or in some cases state and federal funded combined. We have a small cell at the Lake Dunn facility which is 50 per cent funded by Telstra and 50 per cent funded by us, but it is locked to Telstra.

So access to the hardware should not be limited by who won the tender to put it in at federal expense, but there is another development that will hasten that—that is, if we can get decent, reliable, fixed internet into each of our communities, public wi-fi will become the way to communicate. The telcos are already frightened of this because my teenage children have about three numbers saved in their phone because they talk over all other manner of VoIP, or Voice over Internet Protocol, platforms. The telcos are not going to get access to those people if there is fixed wireless here because you do not need to connect to the Telstra, Optus or Vodafone networks to make that a reality. We can circumnavigate the Vodafone issue if we can get reliable community-based internet.

Mrs McMAHON: Yesterday the Premier announced that we are going to be rolling out a Queensland owned data net fibre optic cable throughout regional Queensland, so by the end of the year all of the communities along the Flinders Highway will have fibre optic. In terms of either that triangle or whatever future shape this trapezoidal shaped—

CHAIR: I think it is going to be Muttaborrasaurus shaped.

Mrs McMAHON:—or rhomboid shaped dinosaur trail will be, having fibre optic along those routes makes that whole collective much more attractive and also more widely known. The Instagrammable moments are what is driving a lot of tourism, particularly in younger generations, to be able to capture that using that connectivity. Is that one of the game changers for tourism—that is, making sure that you are in a connectivity zone?

CHAIR: You should have seen the selfies from the deputy chair.

Mr Dillon: I did note the Premier's announcement. It was impressive. There are some limiting factors for communities and indeed all of the communities in my patch for that in that the QCN, which is the operative that is going to roll that out for the government, needs access to mains power transmission lines for that fibre optic and there are none of them in our region. Is fibre optic the solution? Most definitely. Will initiatives that the government announced yesterday improve that? Markedly so, indeed tenfold probably. The trick will be how we get fibre or fixed wireless solutions that rival fibre into these discrete communities such as Muttaborra and Aramac which are not connected by fibre already. The Capricorn Highway has three fibre optic cables running alongside it.

Anyone there is fine. It is when you become discrete from that to the north especially that there will be a connectivity issue, but you are starting to close in the gaps, so I commend the government for that. It is then about closing in the gaps and harnessing that at a local level for a discrete community.

Mrs McMAHON: So the east-west links along the highways are going to be a lot easier and it is those connecting north-south links that are likely to have the issues?

Mr Dillon: Just like our highways; exactly the same. We are very good at building east-west; it is now about making the north-south linkages.

CHAIR: I will invite Mr Bill Spence to the table. Have you met this bloke before?

Mr B Spence: I think I know him. Just an observation: it is good that you got the east-west through Longreach to Winton and Townsville through to Mount Isa, but there is a 200-kilometre gap between there that is just a vacant space as far as your mobile phones go, and there are a lot of tourists who travel between the two. That is just an observation.

CHAIR: That is absolutely right. I think that reinforces what Mayor Dillon was saying that that is an important step, but there are more gaps and more places to fill and some technical issues that need to be worked on for smaller communities. Pearl, you said it was in late '62—we read '63—that Doug found this bone and thought, 'This is interesting. I'll send it down to Brisbane.' What would he think of this now, all these years later, being the state emblem and his forethought and interest being put on the map?

Ms Langdon: To be quite honest, I think if he is looking down here, I think he would be saying that is the best thing he had ever done for Muttaborra. He put Muttaborra on the map by saying, 'I don't want it. I've been asked for millions of dollars for it. I will not sell it.' He sent it to the museum and he said 'Queensland has Muttaborra, has the dinosaur, they can work out how they are going to clean it up and display it for everybody to see.' When that was done he was very proud when they rang up and said it was going to be called the Muttaborrasaurus langdoni, our surname with an 'i' on the end of it. He was so proud of it. Unfortunately, he has not seen the interpretation centre. He knew of it, but he did not survive to see it. I think he would be so proud of the Muttaborra community that has worked so hard to get this building up to honour the town and, of course, it is honouring him and it has got his name now. To be quite honest, his name is also over in Germany. We had a couple of calls from Germany about it. We have been to New Zealand with it. People know all about it. We have been to Tasmania and they knew all about it when we did a tour down there and part of England where we went for a tour and also around Turkey and France where we went for the 95th anniversary of the Anzacs. It is just amazing how the Muttaborrasaurus has gone round the world.

When he first saw the formation on the ground he was just riding off so he went on a bit further and it got the better of him and he said, 'No, I'm going back to have a look.' He got off his pony this time, had a look and brought home this piece. He said it definitely was not a stone to him. He said it was definitely a bone. He came home and he said, 'I've found a dinosaur,' and he showed me this piece of what looked like a rock to me or stone but he said, 'Don't drop it.' That is when he said, 'We'll send it down to the museum in Brisbane.'

At the time we had been having some good rain. Alan Bartholomai was the director of the museum then. He passed away a year after Doug. He said, 'Can you get photos of it?', and Doug said, 'I don't know because of the floods.' Anyhow, Doug got out there. He has had to swim the pony a couple of small channels, got the photos and then by the time we got home, sent them to Longreach to develop them and back, just communication between our mail service, and by the time Alan got the photos he said, 'You've got something.' This is back in late October, early November, December. Alan said, 'We're coming up.' Doug said, 'You can't come up', because the wet season had started. They came up in April and that is when they found the bones. Doug did not find the head. It was when Alan and the others were moving some of the sandstone around that they found this big head. It looked like a big piece of stone to them at the start, but it turned out to be the head. Doug was so proud they found the head. Then they had to use a dentist drill—many dentist's drills—to try to clean it up. It took a long time then to find out a name for it.

I forget, I think someone said about 1983 they named it Muttaborrasaurus langdoni. Doug put his hand in the air, 'Muttaborra, you're on the map!' That is all he really wanted to do. He said, 'I've given it to the town. I've given my thoughts and everything with it.' Not only that, he was also one of the proud returned servicemen because he served in Korea and Malaya. He said, 'I've got my name on the wall up here and the whole town now has Muttaborrasaurus langdoni with us and there is nothing else you can do about it. You will never take it away from us. It has got us on the map.'

CHAIR: Mr Spence said it was an honour for Muttaborra to have the emblem of Queensland. I really feel like it is an honour for us for Muttaborra and the Langdon family to share this with Queensland and it is an honour for us to have you guys as our emblem. It is an honour for all of Queensland.

Mr STEVENS: I feel very emotional about what you just brought forward to us, Ms Langdon. This is an historic piece of legislation. I cannot reiterate that enough. Doug's memory will be forever put in place as the finder of the emblem of Queensland. We are all very proud Queenslanders and even though someone has rudely suggested that they found a Muttaborrasaurus in New South Wales and tried to draw State of Origin rivalry over this matter, the Muttaborrasaurus is a Queensland. Thank you very much for telling us that wonderful story which now stays in history on the *Hansard* record which is very important. We thank Doug for his service and for his stoic commitment to Muttaborra but also to the history of the dinosaurs.

One hundred years ago people did not care about it. In fact, if I may relate a little story about the finding of the Kronosaurus in Queensland. My dad was nine years old. He saw the big camp down there when they excavated land on Army Downs. I used to ride my motorbike up and down while mustering looking for more crocodiles. Back then they rang Sydney museum and said, 'Do you want the Kronosaurus? We found a crocodile.' They said, 'Oh, yeah, that would be great. Can you pack it up and send it down.' That was from a couple of graziers in Richmond in 1926. Harvard University found out about it, came out and set up a big camp. They excavated the whole thing and it now sits in Harvard University—where the chairman actually has a degree from. That to me is a great shame. As you said, the whole world wants our dinosaurs and that Kronosaurus should have stayed here and we could have had it hanging in Richmond, but it is not. We have a bit of a plastic one up there. I am a total convert to the Muttaborrasaurus being the emblem for Queensland. Thank you very much for the wonderful contribution you and your late husband have made.

CHAIR: Are there any other questions?

Mr T Spence: I just got asked if I could ask when this legislation goes through and if there are any proposed designs at this stage for what this emblem may look like.

CHAIR: Both good questions. I think it is an expression. We have a flower that is not necessarily a designated image of it but it is the concept of it. We probably do want to think about an image and talk about sharing rights of the emblem. We might find out and get back to you through the mayor about that. I think we want to, as part of our committee, look at branding and communication and extending this message. This emblem is about recognising the extraordinarily long history Queensland has but also to get people to come and experience that history. We probably need to get back to you. It is a good question. There are two parts to it: one was the image and the other one was the timing. We are mere humble backbenchers here. I have just been told that the Queensland Museum will supply a fossil image to be confirmed. As to the timing of when bills hit parliament, my understanding is that they want to do this relatively quickly. We have a report date of 27 October. I am assuming that it would be the next sitting week after that or the one after that. There may be other things that are reliant on that and other pieces of legislation that need to go through. We will speak to the minister who has carriage of this, Stirling Hinchliffe, and get him to let the mayor know so that you may have that information ahead of time.

Mr STEVENS: I am on the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, which is another committee—we have more committees than we know what to do with—and I raised the matter of the fairly short six-week period for our inquiry into the bill. The Leader of the House, Yvette D'Ath, said to me that we had to get it done pretty quickly so we took it over the school holiday period as well. We are three weeks into that timing now so I am assuming that they want the bill into the House this year. It depends on what other pieces of legislation become urgent or need to be dealt with. That is in the government's hands. As the opposition we have no input whatsoever. It will be the Leader of the House and the minister deciding when they want to put that particular bill into the House. I get the feeling, from experience, that it will be done before Christmas and then it will be set in stone. We do not have an upper house to go through; we just have the one House to make law in Queensland. I am fairly certain that the emblem will be in place before Christmas. In terms of a design, I believe, and I am not sure here, all the other emblems, such as the koala bear around a Q, the Cooktown orchid is just a Cooktown orchid, the little clownfish is just a clownfish, and the sapphire is a rock, so I am not too sure what will happen with the design. It may be just a photo of the Muttaborrasaurus becomes the emblem. I think it would be the bony one, not the covered one, but I am not sure.

Ms Langdon: We do not want to see an animated or a cartoon dinosaur.

Mr STEVENS: No, definitely not.

CHAIR: We will not let Mr Palmer anywhere near it.

Mr STEVENS: Whether it has a covering on it like the one in your centre or whether they do it to emphasise that it is a fossil, that will be up to the government of the day and the people from the tourism organisation.

Mrs McMAHON: There will be consultation, I would imagine.

CHAIR: Yes. Is there anyone else who wanted to have their say?

Ms Robinson: I would like to say to start to try to do our outback tourism with the dinosaurs, signage is a huge thing. We put a sign 40 kays south of Barcaldine that just has a picture and says 'Muttaborra—see you in the centre of Queensland'. Instead of the triangle that we all talk about, why do we not just have something for all Outback Queensland dinosaur centres and have Eromanga and then dot point out all the places with a little bit of a map and huge signs coming into Western Queensland like from Roma and then coming in on the north side—massive big signs about the Queensland Dinosaur Trail out here.

CHAIR: I think that Sean's point was to value-add to things like the Workers Heritage Centre and also to finesse with our friends from other areas and to build upon success. We are not taking away from anyone, we want to build upon success and build upon the trail.

Mr STEVENS: What you are raising is a very important part of the future for paleo tourism. Next year we aim to continue as a committee, and it is our prerogative to do so, to investigate into furthering paleo tourism in Queensland. This particular exercise has been about the emblem and that is why we had to get it done in six weeks, but the matters you raise are very important for our further inquiries and we will be taking that on board next year, as we have agreed as a committee to pursue those matters.

CHAIR: We felt that the emblem was important to address that legislation, but we knew there were broader issues. We certainly want the emblem to further enhance outback tourism through paleo and other tourism. Is there anything else that anyone would like to add?

Mr Williams: I had the honour of visiting the Muttaborra site with Matt Herne, a palaeontologist. I will add a bit of information about the Muttaborrasaurus Interpretation Centre. I felt that it highlights the experience. We have highlighted some good points about infrastructure, telecommunications and signage, but we also need to consider the experience that will be offered to tourists. I think that would be of importance. I had the chance to have quite an intimate fossicking experience, and I think that is something different to what you would get in Hughenden or elsewhere which is probably a bit more comprehensive. It was a very memorable experience and I will never forget it. If anyone else had that experience with an expert such as Matt Herne, it would speak volumes of the area and overall.

CHAIR: Matt said he was going to make a submission on that, which might be useful. We have widened this inquiry for a longer time to look at outback tourism connected with paleo tourism. We encourage absolutely everyone to put in a submission. If you have a heartfelt submission that you think value-adds to our considerations, put it in. We receive lots of submissions and often they are from people who just give a free character assessment of government and do not try to value-add. If you are value-adding, even though it is brief or even though it is about a narrow issue, we encourage you to do that and we very much welcome it.

Mr STEVENS: Thank you for your input today, Michael. We have not dealt with the fossicking experience that much. I think it is a great thing that you have raised.

CHAIR: We did share an ABC video about that type of experience. We could see how it was a rich, deep experience to think about how old these things are that you are touching that other people have not touched. Is there anything else that people would like to say? We are going to have morning tea so you can talk to us then as well.

Ms Langdon: We have not put in a submission, but another thing that would help increase the tourism here is some funding to have a couple of glass cases put in to our Muttaborrasaurus Interpretation Centre for people who have rocks and different things in their homes. They think, 'What do I do with all of these rocks?' or they might have little specimens that could be displayed. The children would love to be looking at them. When you go to museums, the children are always looking at that. They look at all the little things around. I think we should be entitled to at least two more glass cases. I know they are very dear but they will help us to display what we have. People could donate things for a while and then get them back when other people donate their things. We would like two glass cases. We have one big one over here which is very interesting but I am sure people have things. I have a couple of things as well.

Public Forum—Inquiry into the Emblems of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill
2023 and an inquiry into prehistoric dinosaur and paleo tourism in Outback Queensland

This might sound a bit odd but I am with it all the way. We could have a case to display any Aboriginal items that have been found around the area. I know there are some and I know I have got some that have been found and given to us. I do not know where some of them came from but they have been given to us.

CHAIR: That is wonderful. I did wonder what Aboriginal people over the last 50,000 or 60,000 years thought as these things came up from the soil. How did that fit into their ideas? We just heard that it could have been the genesis of the Rainbow Serpent. It seems mind-boggling to think of that length of time. I do not know what Aboriginal people would have been able to comprehend of it. It is very special. Thank you very much, Pearl. It is fantastic. When Lucy said you were able to come, it was moving to us. It has been wonderful to have you here. We really appreciate it.

Ms Langdon: Thank you.

CHAIR: I thank Deane from Hansard. I also thank Lucy from the committee who does a great job. We thank the mayor and Kerry, who is already facilitating out the back, for the hard work they have put in and the warm welcome they have given. They are thinking of the next thing they can get for their community by showing us the great places to visit. With that, I will close the hearing but please talk to us in the informal setting next door.

The committee adjourned at 11.05 am.