

## Inquiry into Crocodile Control and Conservation Bill 2025

**Submission No:** 5  
**Submitted by:** Brandon Sideleau  
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### Submitter Comments:

I would like to begin by pointing out the major problem with seeking public opinion on crocodile conservation and management matters. In this day and age, misinformation is rampant. We need look no further than the matter of anthropogenic climate change to see that allowing the public to make decisions on subjects in which they are ill-informed and do not understand is a mistake. Like climate change, the subject of crocodiles in Queensland is fraught with misinformation and, in some cases, even disinformation (as we have seen from Bob Katter over the years). Let's look at a few facts- first and foremost, the Queensland saltwater crocodile population, at an average of 1.7 non-hatchlings per kilometer, remains 'vulnerable'. Any widespread culling of the population will result in further damage to this insecure population. Secondly, fatal attacks by crocodiles in Queensland still occurred in the 1980s, when the crocodile population was nowhere near what it is today. As was illustrated by Baker et al. 2024 regarding crocodiles in the Top End of the NT, the population would have to be nearly eradicated in order to prevent a single incident. By culling crocodiles, you could lull people into a false sense of security, resulting in more deaths, not fewer. The NT has around 70,000 more non-hatchling crocodiles than Queensland, yet we have only had one fatal attack in 6 years. Clearly the number of crocodiles is not the issue. The number of attacks in Queensland has increased along with increases in the human population, but Queensland DOES NOT have a crocodile problem. For a country with a crocodile attack issue, you need look no further than our neighbors to the north in Papua New Guinea. Only a couple of kms from the Australian islands of the Torres Strait, people are frequently killed by crocodiles in the South Fly District of PNG. In fact, an average of 35-40 people are killed annually by saltwater crocodiles in PNG, dwarfing anywhere in Australia. In Indonesia at least 100 people are killed annually, though the number is likely higher since incidents are seldom reported in Indonesian Papua. The most likely cause of frequent attacks in these countries is the dependency of impoverished human communities on the waterways for their basic survival, since in many areas crocodile populations remain small and in some areas (such as PNG) they are still heavily hunted, with no impact on attack frequency. In East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, for example, the highest crocodile population density is 0.7 individuals per kilometer, yet over 100 people have been killed in this province in 10 years. In Australia, on the other hand, virtually no one needs to use the waterways for bathing or any other subsistence needs. ALL attacks are preventable and are the result of human irresponsibility and error. Furthermore, it is important to view the saltwater crocodile's distribution as one continuous range. It has been confirmed that there is frequent movement of crocodiles between Queensland and PNG via the Torres Strait, and some of PNG's crocodiles may have experience preying upon humans, unlike Queensland's crocodiles. Reducing Queensland's crocodile population could result in colonization of portions of FNQ by crocodiles from PNG, which could be more dangerous. Unless you virtually eradicate crocodiles in multiple countries, the tidal waterways will remain unsafe for swimming. Ultimately, this issue requires greater human management, including steeper fines and jail time for illegally feeding crocodiles and for blatantly ignoring crocodile warning signs (and these laws must be enforced, which has not been the case), increased "CrocWise" education, monitoring of locations where humans and crocodiles coexist, and targeted removal of problem animals. It is important to note that the NT's highly successful management plan (pre-2024, at least) would not work in eastern Queensland, since the human population is much larger, with more population centers. Placing "exclusion zones" around cities would result in the virtual eradication of crocodiles south of the Daintree. In short, decisions on what should be done about crocodiles should be left up to the people with actual knowledge of the subject, not politicians and not the public.