

Inquiry into Crocodile Control and Conservation Bill 2025

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Saltwater crocodiles are a protected native species. They were almost driven to extinction by unregulated, open season hunting for their skins and for 'sport' before their legal protection in the 1970s. Scientists tell us saltwater crocodiles are reestablishing their usual territorial range and population densities before they were almost hunted to extinction after WWII. The current legislation was introduced by Shane Knuth, a Katter Australian Party MP who believes the emotive hysteria, popular myths and the unrelenting media hype around saltwater crocodiles, especially by the Murdoch press which accounts for 95 per cent of newspapers in Queensland. Bob Katter, his MPs and his followers constantly use the fear of crocodile attacks as an excuse to cull them. They use emotive language to spruik that crocodiles are "infesting the North", are "totally out of control", are "cold, mindless killers" and all manner of demonising hyperbole. Any potential change to the existing legislation must be based on scientific research and not populist rhetoric and fear mongering, spurred on by Katter Australia Party and the Murdoch media to gain votes and sell newspapers. The crocodile management model used in the Northern Territory was informed by science. It might be a good model to follow if it can be proved that the existing crocodile management in Queensland is proven to be inadequate. At present a crocodile is deemed to be dangerous and destined for removal if it is "acting in a threatening manner". That descriptor is extremely subjective and ignores the typical territorial behaviour of crocodiles and their ecological role as the apex predator in the ecosystems they inhabit. A crocodile simply sunning itself can be viewed as threatening by people who hate crocodiles and want all of them culled so they and their children can swim where they once did decades ago. This attitude is underpinned by egotistical entitlement that humans should dominate nature. Crocs are extremely dangerous predators, but if you follow the Be Croc Wise in Croc Country advice, encounters are minimised. It's all about respecting crocs as apex predators, not eliminating them. The economic value of croc tourism should not be overlooked or underestimated. Croc tours safely give tourists a great experience and educate them on these magnificent creatures in the process. They provide employment opportunities and income in regional areas. Please don't change the law to allow indiscriminate hunting and killing of crocs. Put more resources into education, not guns. Relocating crocs does not work. Culling crocs also does not work. Crocs migrate widely seeking suitable habitat. Relocating and culling strategies ultimately create a false sense of security that can have fatal consequences. It's the croc you can't see, but can see you, that is the most dangerous, not necessarily the one thermoregulating on a mud bank on a mangrove river that looks threatening simply because it has its jaws open. Scientific facts not public hysteria must always take precedence in any management strategy.