

## **Inquiry into Crocodile Control and Conservation Bill 2025**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Health, Environment and Innovation Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Thank-you for today  
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Dear HEI Committee,

Thank-you for allowing us to attend the Crocodile Control and Conservation Bill session today at Palm Cove. I wanted to give my feedback as an award winning conservationist. I have been working with animals for over 30 years and this is the first time I have felt obligated to write to any member of parliament about decisions being made regarding wildlife. For years I have thought the government knows what it is doing, they have the right advisors, i will just leave it up to them to make the decisions on behalf of the community. But today I realise the government is not well informed and if it is, the decision making process is clouded by emotion, perceptions and perhaps some underlying cultural bias. In recent years I have decided that the biggest threat to biodiversity is political will. We see this more and more across the conservation landscape and the USA presidents executive orders is the most damning evidence of this. I am grateful our government has not gone to these extremes and we still have a democratic process that I am pleased to have been apart of today.

The biggest thing that stood out for me were the views of the indigenous groups that spoke today. Their very clear dialogue on the importance of the crocodile was clearly significant and any decisions the government makes in regards to crocodile will have serious consequences to the "spirit" of aboriginal people living with crocodiles. Working for a non-government organisations that receives Australian government funding, we are constantly in compliance with inclusiveness, gender equity and Free, Informed Prior Consent as our fundamental values and practices when implementing projects with government funding. I urge this committee to seriously take this into consideration as the indigenous views are heard and the deep cultural and spiritual connection that was displayed today is taken into consideration and that the decision that is made by the government of the day "does not do any harm".

I trust that the committee will see that this proposed bill as a complete waste of everyones time. I have spent the last few hours reading through most of the submissions that are publicly available online. It is clear to me that the science around culling or removing crocodiles from particular areas will not result in zero human deaths by crocodiles. In fact, the science says, it could make things worse. As a conservationist who has some understanding of how ecosystems and large apex predators work, keeping big territorial crocodiles in one area is what we should all be aiming for. Once those big crocodiles establish themselves in a waterway, they are the boss and they are the boss for decades! They keep much smaller crocodiles out of that river system covering a much larger home range so this is statistically how you get to prevent human/crocodile interactions. A removal of a large crocodile poses the risk of many smaller crocodiles coming into the area, so statistically people have more chance of seeing or interacting with a crocodile. Small crocodiles are potentially just as lethal as a large one. If I was in your position, this logic alone is all the information I need to say no to this bill. Also note that the government is spending money on Nature Based Solutions (NBS) to fix environmental problems. Maintaining a clear and healthy river system includes the presence of crocodiles so why pay so much money on culling, relocating and housing crocodiles when we can just keep them where they belong to do their environmental service for free!

If the major concern and role of government is about protecting human life, we need to educate people. I personally think we have done a great job at doing that. Someone said today that one death is too many. I think we need to change our perspective on this and be a bit more realistic. Crocodiles and sharks will kill people. So too will horses, cows and dogs. The only difference is we tend to add a layer of fear and hatred towards sharks and crocodiles which our newspapers and politicians lovingly latch onto to get publicity whereas the cow and horse deaths are rarely reported in mainstream media. If you do not know what I am talking about, between 2008-2017 horses and cattle killed 77 Australians whereas crocodiles killed only 17 people. I am not saying these deaths are not tragic, of course they all are, but we need to maintain perspective and no amount of croc culling or "management" is going to change these statistics from 1 death to zero deaths every year. Our only hope in achieving this is via changing attitudes and behaviour. As a hard working conservationist, I can tell you this is a much harder slog but our statistics show the "croc wise" campaigns has worked.

The other thing I wanted to make very clear to the committee is the population estimates of saltwater crocodiles. Two population figures were being spoken about today so let's all be clear about this:

- In Queensland the estimated population is between 20,000 - 30,000 crocodiles with the majority of those found in far north queensland. There is a great resource on the QLD government website that goes through the population estimates. This is probably your best resource and I encourage you to all have a look at this if you haven't done so already.  
[https://environment.desi.qld.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0020/244613/qld-estuarine-croc-monitoring-program-2016-19-report.pdf](https://environment.desi.qld.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0020/244613/qld-estuarine-croc-monitoring-program-2016-19-report.pdf)

- In the Northern Territory the estimated population is 100,000.

Some of the uploaded submissions I have seen are misrepresenting those figures. There is also a belief that the populations are going to 'explode' and move further south but today we heard this is not true because there is not enough viable habitat or food to sustain growing crocodile populations. At some point the populations will get to an equilibrium with large sized individuals dominating waterways and this should be the target to keep people relatively safe.

The underlying tone of MP Shane Knuth's proposed bill and address to parliament bothers me in two ways:

- firstly he speaks about the "good ol days" when people were able to swim and water ski in the rivers and now they can't because of the presence of crocodiles. It is true that in the 1970's people would go water skiing in the Rivers of Innisfail. My uncle was one of those people. This was only possible because the crocodile was so rare that the risk of being bitten by a crocodile was extremely unlikely. It bothers me that this feeling of nostalgia is clouding peoples memories of what was really going on back then. It was not normal to swim and ski in the rivers. There was a huge environmental cost that enabled that to happen. People seem to have forgotten that, and use this as an excuse to cull crocodiles. I am also hearing an underlying feeling of frustration and anger that the government is not doing anything about crocodiles. This is of course not true. Crocodiles are relocated or removed from waterways whenever an issue arises. This is only a bandaaid solution to what people perceive as being a problem. If we did not perceive seeing a crocodile or getting close to a crocodile in a waterway as a problem, there would be no issue. Unfortunately, crocodiles prevent people from getting what they want, eg: unable to fish, launch a boat or swim, and this angers people so they react with their lack of emotional regulation and awareness with the idea of "lets kill the bastard"! If I were to see a crocodile in the wild I would be fascinated and grateful in fact that I was able to be in its awesome presence. This is the main difference I think between the people who are willing to cull the species compared to people who are not.

- Secondly his idea to allow trophy hunting is unfathomable to me. The proposal to permit trophy hunting of crocodiles as a management strategy is deeply troubling. It reflects an outdated and aggressive mindset. One that glorifies domination over nature rather than coexistence. This approach appears rooted in a performative and destructive form of masculinity that still lingers in certain rural Australian culture and attitudes. It has no place in modern conservation policy which should be guided by science, respect for wildlife and ethical stewardship of our natural heritage. The fact that the bill lacks a scientific and ethical advisor within the advisory committee is evidence of this.

You all seem like reasonable and logical people. I have faith that you will throw this bill in the bin where it belongs. But I do hope today does help provide some immediate reform and insight into these areas:

- Queensland Parks and Wildlife work more closely with indigenous people when it comes to moving and managing crocodiles. At the very least, let them know what they are doing and when. It only takes a phone call.
- Queensland Parks and Wildlife work more closely with building their relationships with Indigenous Rangers and listen to their views and include them in any decision making.
- The Government funds relevant not for profit organisations to work with local community and business to raise awareness on best methods to prevent crocodile injury and death.
- Modify the Q-Wildlife app to enable people to report people or businesses feeding crocodiles, killing a crocodile not just the sightings.
- Waterways that are no longer safe for swimming, need to be closed permanently.
- Invest in more crocodile research and collaborative events to enable stakeholders to work together rather than in silos.

Yours truly

Jean Thomas

Resident of Hill