



Speech by

**Fiona Simpson**

**MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE**

Hansard Tuesday, 19 October 2004

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## **NATURAL RESOURCES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

**Miss SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—NPA) (6.01 p.m.): In rising to speak in the debate on the Natural Resources Legislation Amendment Bill I wanted to raise an issue that other members have raised—that is, the problem that occurs when domestic animals become feral and cause problems particularly in country areas. A lot of people will assume that this is the case only in true country or bush areas. With the advent of rural residential areas on the outskirts of urban areas, it is a problem, and one that is very close to home on the Sunshine Coast.

On Monday of this week I attended a broad hectare study release. It showed that the greatest number of developments on the Sunshine Coast, in land volume terms, were rural residential lots. The greatest amount of land being developing is in rural residential areas even though the greatest bulk of lots is in smaller areas. It highlights that there has been an increasing urbanisation around the fringes with rural residential lots. People might have horses or other animals and therefore for lifestyle reasons move to those areas. Some people have had domestic animals which become feral and then become a threat to those who have domesticated animals whether they be dogs, cats or horses.

This is an issue on which I want to seek particularly the minister's assistance. There was mention that a report had been done by the department into the problem of feral dogs, but that has still not been released. We need all the assistance possible. This has caused a lot of distress to people. There is a difficulty with appropriately eradicating domestic animals that have become feral and are a threat not only to domestic animals and livestock but also to native animals.

When there is so much effort across the political divide to do our best to look after our native animals, it is a real tragedy that some domestic animals have become feral and are doing so much damage. Obviously, we know that cats are part of that problem as well. The damage that feral dogs do is pretty frightening. It can be frightening for humans as well. There is the potential for humans to be subject to quite fierce attacks. These animals are not only in truly country areas but also on the edge of urban areas.

I raise this issue as it affects people on the Sunshine Coast and those in parts of my electorate. We need the support of our local shires. We need the support from the minister's department to address this issue more effectively. It is not going away; in fact, it is worsening. We now see mixed use developments. Animals which no longer have owners and have gone wild and bred in the wild are causing damage to people's livestock and their domestic animals and also, most worryingly, causing damage to our native animals.