




Speech by

Jason Costigan

MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

Hansard Wednesday, 12 September 2012

ANIMAL CARE AND PROTECTION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (5.18 pm): I rise in this House to make a short contribution to the debate and speak in support of the Animal Care and Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. Firstly, I would like to place on record my thanks to my parliamentary colleagues on the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee, under the chairmanship of the member for Lockyer, for their work in relation to this bill. Like the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection, I also commend the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry for his leadership on these legislative amendments. Furthermore, I would like to thank the parliamentary committee staff for their assistance and those people who briefed the committee and contributed their views at the round table meeting on 27 June 2012.

Before I go any further, I remind honourable members that the principal purpose of this bill is to make sure that animal welfare obligations under the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 apply to all dealings with animals under Aboriginal tradition or Torres Strait Islander custom.

The bill is about achieving a balance between animal welfare and the hunting rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and, specifically, the hunting of sea turtles and dugong. It is worth reminding members that Queensland is the only state or territory within the Commonwealth with animal welfare legislation that expressly exempts from its application dealings with animals according to Aboriginal or Islander custom. Right now the laws are different in the Northern Territory and that is the place where I first learnt a thing or two about the traditional hunting of turtles; spending two weeks with the Tiwi Islanders as a teenager staying at Nguuu on Bathurst Island at the invitation of the Catholic Church. It is also up in the top end, in the territory, where I have an Aboriginal cousin and, from my observations over a period of time, the law in relation to such matters works quite well and I see no problem in that being replicated here in Queensland.

The Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs made some very valid points in his contribution to the debate. He referred to those hunting rogues that, in my words, do despicable things to our turtles and dugong. These legislative amendments put those rogues well and truly on notice. The minister also made the point that enforcement will not be straightaway. It is not going to happen tomorrow, it is not going to happen next week, it is not going to happen next month. It will only come after education—that is, bringing affected communities up to speed with the new law.

We have heard the member for South Brisbane and the deputy chair of the aforementioned committee refer to the issue of native title. Some of my colleagues have countered some of the argument that the member for South Brisbane has put up here in this debate. In response to that let me say this: the Newman LNP government recognises the entitlement of traditional owners to hunt turtles and dugong for non-commercial use under the Native Title Act 1993. That is right. These amendments will not and do not extinguish native title rights to hunt, nor will they rescind any other hunting rights. Any suggestion that that is the case is pure folly. Given that is the case and the fact that the bill brings Queensland into line with other jurisdictions, I commend the bill to the House.