



Speech by


**Shane Knuth**

**MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE**

Hansard Thursday, 21 June 2012

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## **LAND PROTECTION LEGISLATION (FLYING-FOX CONTROL) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (2.30 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002 and the Nature Conservation Act 1992 to control the health risks posed by flying foxes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Land Protection Legislation (Flying-fox Control) Amendment Bill 2012 [[382](#)].

*Tabled paper:* Land Protection Legislation (Flying-fox Control) Amendment Bill 2012, explanatory notes [[383](#)].

It is with great pleasure and satisfaction that after eight years, first as the member for Charters Towers and now as the member for Dalrymple, I am finally able to say that I fully support a bill that deals with the flying fox plague that has harassed Charters Towers residents and other communities in Queensland for more than a decade. The failure of successive governments, including the current government, to adequately understand or appreciate the destruction these pests have wrought on the town of Charters Towers is no excuse for the way the lives of people in my community have taken a back seat to the welfare of these pests.

The Land Protection Legislation (Flying-fox Control) Amendment Bill 2012 empowers landowners, including local governments, to take necessary and reasonable action to address the serious health risk presented by increasing concentrations of flying fox populations in residential areas. The bill also removes unnecessary penalties applying to the taking or handling of flying foxes or disturbing a flying fox roost.

The threat of disease and the intolerable living conditions for communities who have been forced to live with flying foxes in their tens of thousands are things that most members have to deal with directly, although I am sure the Deputy Premier will appreciate the implications of this bill for the Gayndah community. Flying fox populations are known to carry viruses deadly to humans: the Australian bat lyssavirus, which is closely related to common rabies lyssavirus; salmonella; leptospirosis; SARS; and Hendra virus. The Australian bat strain of lyssavirus has caused two human fatalities since it was discovered in Australia in 1996.

More concerning is the growing number of Hendra virus outbreaks amongst horse populations and the increased exposure to humans as a result. This virus has caused over 70 horse fatalities and four human fatalities since 1994. That is a 75 per cent fatality rate in horses and a 60 per cent fatality rate in humans. The recent discovery that the virus can be transmitted to dogs further escalates the risk to humans. This has been a ticking time bomb for Charters Towers, where a colony of flying foxes in their tens of thousands has established a roost in Lissner Park, right in the centre of town. I table my introductory speech.

*Tabled paper:* Land Protection Legislation (Flying-fox Control) Amendment Bill 2012, introductory speech [[395](#)].

### **First Reading**



**Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (2.33 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### **Referral to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee**

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mrs Cunningham): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee.