




Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

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ANIMAL CARE AND PROTECTION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (5.23 pm): The Animal Care and Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 seeks to balance animal welfare with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander hunting rights. Once again we have a bill before the House on which there has been limited consultation with those most impacted by the outcomes. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups have widely condemned the lack of consultation that has gone into creating this bill. The real motivation for this bill comes from the bleeding heart animal liberationists who want us all to adhere to their way of thinking and become vegetarians, stop rodeos and campdrafts, ban live exports and allow cattle and livestock to roam free over plains while they live in their leafy, innercity suburbs sipping skinny soy lattes and planning the destruction of Australia's billion dollar meat industry.

This bill is a knee-jerk reaction that will impact on the practice of thousands of years of traditional culture. As noted by the LGAQ, failure to allow meaningful input from the communities most affected by this bill contradicts government policy to empower local government and give people a real say on the future direction of their community. In accordance with this government's position on greater control being given to local government, the practice of tradition should be managed by local government authorities in Indigenous communities.

Those affected by this legislation have not contributed to the bill and therefore the implications to Indigenous communities is unknown and unaddressed. The government has made cultural assumptions about Indigenous communities without giving communities an appropriate hearing and input into the legislation. The recommendation to pass this bill fails to hold the government accountable for its infringement on the democratic entitlements of Indigenous communities. The government intends to consult with the communities after the legislation has been passed. All that means is that government departments will tell Indigenous communities how they will now practice culturally significant customs regardless of how this legislation impairs the relevance of those customs. In other words, cultural practices that have significant spiritual, communal and inherited meaning will be made redundant by the inability to conduct those practices in culturally meaningful ways.

I have worked with Indigenous people in Queensland Rail for over 20 years and during that time I have been a participant in many ceremonial meals of turtle and dugong. These meals have nearly always required the transportation of meat. It is unbelievable that the culture of sharing the prized possession of traditional food in these regions will be stopped. The cultural significance of sharing these sea animals with family cannot be underestimated and has received no attention by this government. This is just one of the cultural implications of this bill and only raised because of my personal experience.

This is very similar to the issue of live exports. Members will remember the year that we were hit with high bank interest rates. It was the same year that we had an unusually large rainfall and a whopping big flood that affected contractors, subcontractors, truckies and landowners. In that year we were also hit with a massive cyclone. Just as we were getting out of it the Gillard government slams a live export ban on us because of a bit of live footage which spread panic across the federal government. It closed down a

multimillion dollar industry and ruined the lives of people. This is the same situation. The LNP has seen bad footage in relation to traditional hunting and said, 'We must do something about this. This is cruel and barbaric.' This is a panicked, rushed decision just before the election, with a promise of 100 days, without consultation with Indigenous people. Many members got up and said that they consulted. There was no consultation at all, none whatsoever. I receive phone calls every day from Indigenous people as a result of this rushed decision without consultation. If there was consultation they would have gone to the Indigenous communities and had a look for themselves to see how they go about it. They would have talked to them about how this will affect them and how this is something they have been practising since time immemorial. But they saw footage and panicked, just like the Gillard government did with live exports.

The government should not assume that its mandate provides the authority to circumvent the human rights of Indigenous people to practise culturally significant traditions. This legislation denies Indigenous people the opportunity to practise cultural traditions that have been in place since time immemorial. I cannot support this bill.

A government member interjected.

Mr KNUTH: Go and talk to them then.