




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

Record of Proceedings, 16 October 2013

**NATURE CONSERVATION (PROTECTED PLANTS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (6.07 pm): I rise to speak to the Nature Conservation (Protected Plants) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I support the minister and commend him for this bill. There is an opportunity to save \$50 million by the reduction of unnecessary red and green tape, and those funds will be able to benefit the community in some other way.

I believe that the protection of Australian native plants is very important, and there is a threat posed by the takeover of noxious weeds not just on grazing land but also public land, national parks and river systems. It is a massive problem which costs this country millions of dollars in lost production.

It is important that we protect our native plants. Our native wildlife has over generations lived, bred and developed by being able to survive on our native plant life for feed and habitat. There is a wildlife corridor in the Malanda area. It is very important for the sustainability of that region. I refer to the recent opening of the information centre. Last week 8,000 people went through that information centre. One of the main attractions was the tree kangaroo. At present I am working with the minister to develop strategies to raise awareness of the crossing of the tree kangaroo in that region. The tree kangaroo attracts many tourists. Those tourists put so much into the economy of that town.

Earlier I spoke about noxious weeds. Lantana is an example. Cattle eat lantana, they get sick and die. It takes over that country. It has taken over many of our state forests. Likewise, parthenium is doing the same. So native plants are competing against noxious weeds. There is always an opportunity to use noxious weeds. For example, prickly acacia can be used as a feedstock for power generation.

Mr Rickuss: Weeds are just plants in the wrong place.

Mr KNUTH: I know. In the end, I think this is good legislation. It removes red tape but, at the same time, ensures the protection of plants. We need to address the problem of noxious weeds as they compete with native plants.

I refer to feral pigs. Feral pigs can carry weeds with their feet from one rainforest to another and throughout the river system. Coordination is required in terms of reducing the number of feral pigs. There is an estimated 20 million feral pigs in North Queensland. If we want to protect plants, we also have to look at getting rid of the vermin.