




Speech By  
**Deb Frecklington**

**MEMBER FOR NANANGO**

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**CRIMINAL CODE AND ANOTHER ACT (STOCK) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (4.53 pm): It gives me great pleasure to stand in this House and follow the wonderful member for Gregory and his eloquent speech. It is members like the member for Gregory who do support our regional areas with the passion that they do, and it is very, very important for members such as me to be able to follow him in this House.

I do rise to support the Criminal Code and Another Act (Stock) Amendment Bill 2014. I would like to thank the Attorney-General, the Hon. Jarrod Bleijie, for bringing this bill before the House. I would also like to acknowledge the work and the contribution of the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee, chaired by Mr Ian Rickuss, my colleague here beside me, for reviewing this bill, and I note that the committee recommended that the bill be passed.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the amendments contained in this bill will directly benefit the graziers in my electorate who live with the daily possibility of stock theft from their properties. In my electorate this relates mainly to cattle producers, but we also have graziers with sheep, goats, horses and other livestock. It gives me absolute pleasure to stand in this House and support another common-sense LNP Newman government bill before this House. It is just simply unfortunate that there are so many stock related offences which account for millions of dollars of losses in primary production mainly because investigations often involve significant police and state resources. On that point, I am very proud to acknowledge the hard work of my two local stockies in the Nanango electorate, Detective Sergeant Mark Ferling, who is a fantastic—

**Mr Dempsey:** Holly Ferling!

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I take that interjection by the minister. He is the father of the amazing Holly Ferling, who has just completed her third international cricket tour and she is only 18. She has only just finished school. She is an amazing example of—

**A government member:** They breed 'em good in Nanango!

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** They do breed them well in Nanango! I do appreciate the work of Detective Sergeant Mark Ferling, and he is ably assisted by Detective Senior Constable Paul Jones. Whilst these two stockies might be stationed in Kingaroy, they cover a massive area. It is great that their minister is sitting in the House so that he can acknowledge their hard work too. Like all the stockies around the state they really do have these massive areas to police, so the amendments to the bill will make their lives easier.

I wish to acknowledge one of the common-sense initiatives that the Attorney-General has allowed to go through with this bill, and that is in relation to the admissibility of visual recordings. That is common sense. Obviously in the past the stock has had to be kept somewhere, so this bill obliges a police officer who seizes an animal in connection with a criminal charge to cause a visual record to be taken of the animal which is then admissible in a proceeding as evidence of its existence and, most importantly, the condition of the animal and any identifying marks on the animal. Further, objection

cannot be taken to the visual record being used as evidence of these facts. This means that the photographs rather than the actual animal or its skin and ears can be relied upon by the prosecution as evidence during a trial.

I can tell you now that this is common sense, and it makes sense to me that the Newman LNP government would bring this in because obviously it is saving administration time for our hardworking stockies. These detectives can now take a visual record of the evidence. A couple of years ago in my electorate there was a case of severe animal cruelty, and the cost to the government for holding these animals was absolutely incredible. This sort of common-sense amendment should have been brought in years ago. It does not surprise me that it was not, because they were not a can-do government. We on this side of the House are a can-do government. We have stepped in and we have decided to get things done, and we have empowered our stockies on the ground like 'Jonesy' and 'Ferlo' in Kingaroy.

Another important and common-sense change that this bill makes is that it allows a judge or a magistrate—and usually it would be a magistrate—to make a stock disposal order enabling police to avoid the lengthy and expensive agistment of stock while criminal cases are pending, and this is what I was talking about earlier in relation to the animal cruelty case in Kingaroy a couple of years ago that I mentioned. That case involved cruelty to dogs and the agistment of those dogs cost an absolute fortune because they had to be impounded whilst the case was going on. This amendment allows the police to sell stock without prejudice to the interests of the complainant or the defendant and, importantly, the net proceeds are dispersed at the end of the criminal trial.

The reason I am standing here in support of this bill is that it is evidence that our government—the Newman government—supports rural industries. It also supports rural Queenslanders and understands the cost to the state of stock related offences. They are costly to the community, with losses for primary producers running into the millions each year. That is why we have put in this can-do plan to strengthen our stock laws and to stamp out cattle stealing. This is a serious crime that should also justify an increase in penalties. The rise in stock offences penalties from \$200 to \$1,100 is in line with current community expectations—that is, if you do the crime, you pay for it. These fines should be paid by offenders because those offenders are trying to profit from our good, hardworking graziers, cattle producers and stock producers across the state. It is the hardworking graziers such as those in my electorate who are quite often at the hard end of the deal with drought and the market conditions that they are currently facing. It is wonderful to see that we are bringing these fines in line with current community expectations.

With the small amount of time that I have left I want to acknowledge the difference between our government and the previous government. I heard one of the members opposite say that they set up the working group. It is interesting to note that they may have, but they did not do anything about it. It was so typical of what the former Labor government did. They set up a lot of working groups, but did they ever do anything? I do not believe they did.

**Mr Krause:** Two months before the election!

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I take that interjection from the member for Beaudesert: two months before the election. How convenient! I am proud to stand here to fully support these amendments which will restore the rights of stock owners and give them confidence once again in the system. This bill reflects our government's respect for a contemporary beef industry which deserves better protection and also gives appropriate powers to our Stock and Rural Crime Investigation Squad. I fully support the bill before the House.