




Speech By
Hon. Jarrod Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Record of Proceedings, 1 April 2014

CRIMINAL CODE AND ANOTHER ACT (STOCK) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (3.48 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I thank the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee for its consideration of the Criminal Code and Another Act (Stock) Amendment Bill 2014. The committee tabled its report on 25 March 2014. The committee has made a recommendation that the bill be passed and the government of course accepts that recommendation. The committee also raised four points for clarification, which I will now address. The committee has invited me to liaise with the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience to encourage councils that have not adopted model animal impoundment laws to do so. I advise the House that I have now written to my ministerial colleague the Hon. David Crisafulli, the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience, on this point.

The committee has invited me or the Minister for Police to assure the House that police and other authorised officers will meet their general biosecurity obligations when searching for and mustering stock so as to minimise the spread of cattle ticks, invasive weeds, invasive animals and other biosecurity hazards. I have consulted now with the Minister for Police, the Hon. Jack Dempsey, and I am satisfied that the Queensland Police Service has the appropriate resources at its disposal to perform its statutory obligations under the Biosecurity Act 2014 and the Stock Act 1915.

The committee has invited me or the Minister for Police to assure the House that the police will endeavour to execute a forced muster order efficiently so as to minimise inconvenience for the property owner. Again, I have consulted with the Minister for Police and I am satisfied that a range of options are available to ensure that police who execute forced muster orders will do so effectively and efficiently. This includes ensuring that appropriate internal management processes within the Queensland Police Service are applied and can extend to investigations of the appropriate actions of police officers by external agencies such as the Crime and Misconduct Commission.

The committee has invited me to inform the House of what briefings the Department of Justice and Attorney-General will provide to officers of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and other departments and representatives of bodies representing landholders and stock owners and what information will be passed to individual landowners about the proposed provisions in the bill. I can inform the House that the bill is proposed to commence by proclamation. This approach is being taken in order to ensure that the Queensland Police Service Stock and Rural Crime Investigation Squad has sufficient opportunity to ensure that it and its stakeholders are ready for the legislation.

The implementation plan includes the following: firstly, communication with Queenslanders via a media announcement from the office of the Minister for Police advising of the commencement of the

legislation; secondly, direct communication of the amendments to key stakeholders; thirdly, readiness and approval of general police policy and procedures and also Queensland Police Service Stock and Rural Crime Investigation Squad local policy, procedures and forms to support the legislation; fourthly, readiness and approval of updates to police computer systems and the official police internet site to reflect changes in the legislation; and, fifthly, a public information release on the police website to advise the community of the impacts of the legislative changes.

It is usual practice following the passage of a bill for the Department of Justice and Attorney-General to formally write to all key stakeholders to inform them of that fact. In this case, I am advised that the department anticipates writing to the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Queensland Law Society, AgForce, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the National Farmers Federation and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. As a matter of courtesy, as the provisions of the bill relate to the jurisdiction of the District Court and the Magistrates Court, the Chief Judge and the Chief Magistrate will also be informed.

The bill delivers on recommendations made by a working group comprised of industry and government experts on a range of issues in the area of stock offending. The provisions enabling the disposal of stock under court orders pending finalisation of criminal charges will assist in the administration of justice. The provisions increasing minimum penalties will assist in deterring stock offenders. The forced muster provisions will help resolve disputes about strayed stock and their recovery. I commend the bill to the House.