




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

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CRIMINAL CODE AND ANOTHER ACT (STOCK) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (7.41 pm): I rise to speak to the Criminal Code and Another Act (Stock) amendment Bill. The explanatory notes to the bill under the heading, 'Policy objectives and the reasons for them' state—

The objectives of the bill are to ... make improved provision for the disposal of stock which have been seized by police in connection with a charge of a stock offence ... rename the 'Animal Valuers Tribunal' as the 'Animal Valuers Panel' to better reflect the non-judicial nature of animal valuer experts ... end the *Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000* to ... permit a magistrate or judge to make a forced muster order for the retrieval of stray stock in circumstances where the landowner onto whose land the stock have strayed is withholding permission for the stock owner to enter and retrieve the stock ... and enhance police search warrant powers with respect to investigations of stock offences.

We cannot guarantee that this bill will be the be-all and end-all and will result in perfection harmony. This is not an easy situation. In many circumstances it is neighbour against neighbour. During drought periods, as the member for Gregory would understand, cattle will smash through fences, get out on the roads, go through neighbours' blocks and be in the next door neighbour's block. I commend the minister and all those who have contributed to putting this legislation forward because it is not easy legislation. The stock squad does a great job in Queensland. Queensland is a massive state. The member for Gregory mentioned earlier the importance of stock inspectors who are playing their part. They have a big area to cover. North Queensland is an area of a quarter of a million square miles. There are huge distances that have to be covered to ensure that we do not have stock theft, that properties are protected and neighbour disputes are resolved.

The legislation that is delivered by this bill has not been easy to put together. There is support from AgForce and police stock inspectors who have participated in putting this legislation together to get the best outcomes in relation to stock theft and neighbour disputes. If one buys 100 heifers it will take five years before there is a return. The last thing you want is someone to come along and steal that return from you. I believe that this legislation puts in place a framework to ensure that there are safeguards so that a person does receive that return. There are many issues to contend with in the cattle industry, including drought, theft and diseases such as botulism where cattle drop dead as a result of chewing bones. There are many factors involved in trying to make a living in the cattle industry. At one time they used to say that you needed 17,000 acres to make a living. I would say at this present time you need 100,000 acres to make a living. There are also the difficult circumstances in relation to the depressed market, especially with the banning of live exports to countries such as Indonesia. As a consequence of the banning of live exports to Indonesia and the scare campaign I believe the grazing industry has been absolutely gutted.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr KNUTH: The member for Lockyer is right. I am not arguing with him. It is an issue that is hurting people and the industry. There have been suicides and bankruptcies. There have been many properties handed in. When there is the opportunity of an export market and that is then taken away, graziers hold onto their stock and look for other markets. When there is a drought and a surplus of

cattle and the banks are breathing down their throat it is not an easy thing. It causes great fear and concern in the grazing industry. I hope we can all work together and not make this a political game. We want the best outcome for those in the cattle industry who are suffering. Recently, the Aussie Helpers were in Charters Towers with four semitrailer loads of hay to support those who were battling in the grazing industry. It was great to see those people and businesses who were supporting the industry such as IGA, FoodWorks, the Lions club that donated \$50,000 in support of those graziers and the forklift operators who helped give those people a few bales of hay to help them out through these difficult times. When there is stock theft in the middle of all these difficulties, which takes away the livelihood that they are struggling to make a living at, it is even more difficult.

This is a complicated issue that deals with disputes between neighbours. These types of disputes have been going on since time began. The last thing I want to do is get up in parliament and point the finger. I commend the minister, the department, the industry, the police and all those who have been involved in trying to sort out the issues and deliver this outcome. I can see that it is an important thing not to ridicule, but to say, 'Full credit to you.' I commend this bill to the House.