




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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AGRICULTURE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (4.34 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate of the Agriculture and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. This bill amends some 10 acts. It addresses some simple spelling mistakes and inconsistencies with Commonwealth legislation. On the whole, it is considered a bit of a tidy-up bill. I congratulate the previous minister for, I am sure, a lot of the work that went into this. That has resulted in this minister being able to bring this bill before the House. In a way, this is continuing to work collaboratively with both sides of the House. I acknowledge the hard work of the committee members, who did look at this bill and agreed to recommend that the bill be passed without any major amendments.

There are a few things that I want to add in relation to this vital bill, because obviously it is about agriculture. We all know—I am quite sure that the minister will agree with me—that at this time, when the state is suffering from such horrendous human catastrophe that is happening out west, some of the amendments, particularly around the wild dog provisions, will make landholders and agricultural producers feel more secure in the day-to-day management of their property.

The amendments to the Biosecurity Act are required to continue to allow landholders to destroy wild dogs attacking their stock on their land. This is of such vital importance—

Ms Leahy: They are a plague.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: They are a plague. They are at plague proportions. I have had the advantage of travelling through the Warrego and Gregory electorates and I have seen firsthand the devastation these dogs are having on the remaining stock. It is simply incredible. It seems that the drier it gets the greater the plague proportions of the dogs. Responses include fencing, prevention and getting rid of wild dogs, which are certainly one of Queensland's worst pest animals. In some areas they are having a devastating impact. We cannot underestimate the vital importance of this amendment for landholders. We need to ensure the livelihood of our agricultural producers and we also need to consider people's mental health.

While there has been some success in wild dog control in certain areas, we call on the government to reactivate QDOG, which was going so well under our government. In terms of the comments made in this place, it is so distressing when I hear some of the comments in relation to our government. The honourable member for Ipswich just talked about how we wasted money on red-tape reduction. From being out and about I can say that that is not what the people of rural and regional Queensland are concerned about. They are concerned about ensuring that we get the ridiculous red tape under control and do not go back down the track of previous Labor governments of letting red tape build up.

I refer, for example, to the native vegetation legislation and say that that is just bad legislation, it is bad regulation and we cannot have it. I have to support the fact that this minister has taken it upon himself to add this amendment to this bill because we need to do whatever we can to support our

agricultural producers, particularly in the prevention of wild dog attacks and the destruction they cause given their numbers. This is obviously about reducing red tape, but most importantly it is about protecting our primary producers to enable them to run their properties the way they should. Should they have to destroy a wild dog that is eating their stock, then they should not be subject to criminal liability or have to pay compensation for the destruction of that dog. That is a purely common-sense amendment to the legislation.

I reiterate that I look forward to the minister reinstating QDOG and those meetings. After my indication to the minister through the estimates process, the minister gave me that statement and then following the estimates process on 27 August he made a further statement. I thank the minister for announcing that he will be working in and around that QDOG space. I am not sure if it will remain to be called QDOG, but the minister is well aware of the problems of wild dogs.

This bill also contains amendments to the Exotic Diseases in Animals Act and in relation to standstill zones. The current EDIA Act provides for the minister to issue a notice under subordinate legislation to establish a restricted area. There is an amendment in this bill where the minister is moving that power to the chief executive. This bill also amends the Stock Act, providing inspectors with greater flexibility on a case-by-case basis without imposing absolute quarantine over an entire area or over an entire category of stock. Again, these are common-sense amendments to that legislation because they allow the people on the ground—the inspectors—more flexibility.

It seems very petty to raise this issue, but given that the Labor Party constantly seems to have an aversion to thinking that this side of the House even acknowledges females, I was extremely disappointed to read throughout the explanatory notes that inspectors and the chief executive were constantly referred to as 'he'. I note that Beth Woods is a very good choice as the future director-general. However, she would be a 'she' when throughout the explanatory notes there is reference to 'he'. I am not normally petty like that, but I know that if I had done that I am quite sure I would have had every single Labor female member telling me that I should not be just talking about males and that it should be he/she. Given that I am the first ever female that has been appointed to the position of shadow agriculture minister or agriculture minister in the state of Queensland, I am very proud of the fact that I have that position and I think that it is about time that in the agricultural space we start referring to 'he' and 'she'. I am sure the minister would agree with me given his party's stance in relation to that issue.

The bill also enables amendments to the Agriculture and Veterinary Chemicals (Queensland) Act which will enable drones. This is bringing into the sphere of agriculture an ability for agricultural producers to use drones for the spraying of chemicals. Again, this is just common sense to bring us in line with other states and the Commonwealth to ensure that those drones can spread chemicals. Obviously there are concerns around oversprays and things like that, and I am sure the department will be looking into those. I ask the minister: should a drone have an overspray over fences, what would happen in those cases? I understand that the committee addressed that issue and the deputy chair of that committee will speak further on that issue. Those amendments are needed to ensure that our farmers and our agricultural chemical companies and spray operators are able to keep up with the latest technologies. We have some amazing operators who are working in this space and this amendment to that legislation will really assist them.