




Speech By
Joseph Kelly

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

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EXHIBITED ANIMALS BILL

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (5.10 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Exhibited Animals Bill 2015. I support the objectives of this bill, which streamlines the regulatory framework for exhibiting and dealing with exhibited animals; importantly, it ensures animal welfare. That is something that this government takes very seriously, as we saw from the Premier's announcement yesterday in our response to the recent greyhound inquiry. This bill also manages biosecurity and safety risks, which is another matter that we take very seriously. Minister Byrne is to be commended for his actions in relation to the North Queensland banana industry.

For many city kids, zoos and aquaria are their first experience of non-domestic animals which can initiate a lifetime of interest in nature. The world can, and does, change fast. In my own childhood I had frequent opportunities to see and interact with animals. Visits to farms, growing up in Charters Towers and on Magnetic Island and numerous camping trips all provided opportunities to interact with animals, both domestic such as cattle and horses, but also with native animals such as kangaroos, echidnas, goannas and birds of all kinds. I seldom recall visiting a zoo or a circus, and a trip to Sea World would have been an unthought-of of luxury, but the circuses at the Mount Gravatt showground and Sea World are the places where my own kids have experienced animals for the first time. With the passing of this bill it will be easier for exhibitors to give kids these experiences.

This bill will simplify the processes for exhibitors with many flow-on benefits. This bill replaces six licensing schemes and parts of four acts with a single licensing scheme under a single act. Simplifying the licensing system is a big win for exhibitors. There are currently several licensing systems with different application procedures, fees and conditions. Some exhibitors require numerous licences for the one show. All of this will be a thing of the past under this bill.

In addition to simplifying the licensing scheme, the length of time will be increased from two years in some cases to a standard three years, reducing application times and complexity for exhibitors. I am proud to be part of a Palaszczuk Labor government that has jobs as its No. 1 priority. This bill will clear the way for growth in an industry that already contributes over \$100 million to our economy and employs over 1,000 people. Hopefully some of these businesses will take advantage of the 25 per cent payroll rebate and employ some apprentices or trainees. Growth in this industry means more jobs, and this is our government's No. 1 priority.

This industry supports not just the businesses that exhibit animals; it supports tourism based businesses, as many tourists are drawn from overseas and domestically within Australia to the businesses that exhibit animals. Some businesses have become iconic in the world, with businesses such as Australia Zoo being a household name in Asia, Europe and the United States. There is no doubt that tourism based businesses have struggled over the past few years. Our government is serious about supporting tourism in any way that we can.

Our economy is also gaining much from locally based film production. This bill will make it easier for film production businesses to choose Queensland as a location for their job-creating projects. This bill does two important things: first, it puts animal welfare at the front and centre of

importance. This government takes animal welfare seriously, as do the vast majority of people who live in the electorate of Greenslopes. I would not support this bill unless it rigorously protected animal welfare. Secondly, it ensures community safety. It will ensure that exhibitors assess and manage risks to patrons who are present when exhibiting some animals. It will also protect our environment by making sure that animals that have a high potential to become pests if released in Australia are managed in a way that will not allow this to happen. Growing up in Townsville I was very familiar with our many extra family pets: the cane toads. Sadly, I now find these pests in my Greenslopes backyard. We do not need a repeat of this situation, and this bill will make sure that this does not happen. Exhibitors will be required to have management plans in place to minimise the risk of exhibited animals escaping to become pests. This will be monitored by inspectors.

There are also more immediate risks posed to the public from exhibited animals that escape, with real danger to spectators if some animals escape. This bill requires exhibitors to have a plan in place to minimise risks, and it backs this up with regular monitoring by inspectors. Some inspections will incur a fee which will incentivise compliance, because the frequency of visits and associated costs will be directly related to the record of compliance.

I would like to thank the committee for its hard work on this bill and for streamlining the many bills into one. I would also like to thank those who took the time to contribute. This is clearly an industry that I was not familiar with, but one that has a great potential to create employment in Queensland if we get it right.

Finally, I support this bill for two further reasons: the bill streamlines regulations in a way that maintains a regulatory framework that protects the animals, the business, the community and our environment. This will clearly be beneficial for businesses in this industry. This bill has involved extensive consultation with key stakeholders. Anything involving animal welfare is, rightly, a highly contested area of policy debate; however, following through on our government's commitment to listen and consult, this bill has dealt with a complex and difficult issue in a manner that has arrived at good outcomes for animals, for exhibitors, for businesses, for the community and for the environment. I commend this bill to the House.