




Speech By
Shane King

MEMBER FOR KALLANGUR

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EXHIBITED ANIMALS BILL

 **Mr KING** (Kallangur—ALP) (5.49 pm): I rise to support the Exhibited Animals Bill 2015 presented by the honourable Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing. This bill will remove some of the regulations around the exhibited animals industry. This industry, although small, employs up to a thousand Queenslanders and contributes about \$100 million to our economy. This industry includes large zoos, aquaria, theme parks, wildlife parks, mobile wildlife demonstrators who exhibit at community and private events, circuses and magicians.

The current legislation around this industry is complex, with provisions spread across four acts—the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002, the Fisheries Act 1994, the Nature Conservation Act 1992 and the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001. The current legislation regulating the industry is confusing for operators, and me, with more than six licensing schemes under these acts which may apply to an exhibitor.

Mr Rickuss: Did you read those acts?

Mr KING: Have you read them? Some exhibitors will need more than one licence to operate their business.

This bill will do a number of things. It will: provide certainty and streamlining of the processes for exhibiting and dealing with exhibited animals; ensure that the associated animal welfare, biosecurity and safety risks and relevant adverse effects of such exhibits are prevented or minimised by addressing gaps with a cohesive, comprehensive and consistent risk based regulatory framework for exhibited animals; and reduce red tape for animal exhibitors by consolidating and streamlining regulation.

This bill will make improvements in a number of ways by: providing for a greater range of species to be exhibited in Queensland, provided the risks can be minimised; simplifying how Queensland legislation authorises the exhibition of animals that generally cannot be kept without a licence; implementing a holistic, risk based approach to regulating the exhibited animals industry; and reducing the regulatory burden on exhibitors by introducing a single licensing scheme under which exhibitors can be authorised to keep and exhibit both native and some exotic animals regardless of their industry sector.

This bill will continue to prohibit dealings with some potential pest animals that are listed as prohibited matter and restrict dealings with other pest animals that are listed as restricted matter, except where they are authorised by a permit issued under the Biosecurity Act or authorised under another Queensland or Commonwealth law.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Grace): Order! Sorry, member for Kallangur, could you pause for a moment. There is a little too much audible conversation in the House at the moment. I ask members to please keep it down. I call the member for Kallangur.

Mr KING: The bill provides for comprehensive and consistent management of animal welfare, biosecurity and safety risks posed by the industry in Queensland, principally by introducing the general exhibition and dealing obligation. This bill will require industry participants to take reasonable and practical steps to prevent or minimise the risks to animal welfare, biosecurity and safety and the relevant adverse effects on the welfare of any animal, the health, safety or wellbeing of a person or social amenity, the economy and environment associated with exhibiting and dealing with the animal. This obligation will apply consistently to all animal exhibits, including those that do not need a licence.

Under the bill animal exhibits will be licensed in response to a management plan prepared by the applicant, explaining how they would minimise the relevant risks and relevant adverse effects. The licences will only be granted for up to three years. Developing a management plan represents an opportunity for exhibitors to use their expert knowledge to address risks relevant to their specific circumstances.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry, member for Kallangur, for interrupting again. There is too much audible conversation in the House. I ask once again that if members want to have conversations to please take them outside. I am struggling to hear the member for Kallangur. It would be nice to be able to hear him. Members, once again, can we keep the conversations to either nil or a very low level in the House.

Mr KING: This will seek to encourage the industry to take more responsibility for further improvements in risk management by allowing for accreditation through this private assessment scheme. Safeguards within the bill, such as the requirement to disclose conflicts of interest in relation to assessments and management plans, will maintain the integrity of the private assessment scheme.

This risk based licensing framework will involve regular compliance assessments of licensed exhibitors. An official assessment conducted by the department at the exhibitor's cost will generally be required to provide sufficient evidence to decide an application for the grant, renewal or significant amendments to a licence. However, an inspector will have powers to make random audits or to investigate complaints to monitor compliance with the legislation. The frequency of assessments will depend upon the compliance record of the exhibitor.

As stated, the bill will allow a greater range of species to be exhibited in Queensland. Some of these are—and I will not go down the path of the member for Logan—meerkats, which are currently in a TV advertising campaign and we could do with more of them; the Patagonian mara, which is a large rodent similar to the quokkas in Western Australia; the capybara, another large rodent that resembles a wombat; the veiled chameleon, which is a lizard in case members did not know; and the cape porcupine, a South African porcupine and apparently an old-world porcupine. Sadly, Johnny Depp's dogs, Pistol and Boo, will still not be allowed in Queensland.

There are contained within the bill deterrents to private collectors operating under the guise of keeping for exhibition. I do note that the RSPCA, Animals Australia, a university academic with an interest in animal welfare and ethics and licensed exhibitors were consulted. These stakeholders were very supportive of the key principles.

I note in the explanatory notes there is an indication a lengthy consultation process was undertaken between 2008 and the finalisation of this bill. I note whilst national standards for the exhibition of animals in Australia are currently under development, the bill will provide a legislative framework that will enable adoption of the national standards as codes of practice which will improve consistency across Australian jurisdictions. To sum up, as stated clearly by the minister, the Exhibited Animals Bill 2015 will create a new regulatory and licensing framework specifically for the animal exhibition industry. The bill will streamline and simplify the licensing of exhibitors. A single licence will replace the six fragmented schemes under the current legislation.

The bill will create new opportunities for Queensland businesses by ensuring that future licensing decisions are based on risks, not lists. It will allow exhibitors to keep almost any animal for any type of exhibition provided they can manage the risks. That means opportunities for business to exhibit a greater range of species in Queensland provided the risks can be minimised and it gives them the flexibility they need to grow the economy and create the jobs our state needs.

I congratulate the minister, the committee, the department and the industry—and everyone for listening to me—and I have heard that Australia Zoo are very good as well. All of these people have done the hard work and put in the effort to achieve this legislation. I commend the bill to the House.