




Speech By  
**Deb Frecklington**

**MEMBER FOR NANANGO**

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Record of Proceedings, 12 May 2016

**ANIMAL MANAGEMENT (PROTECTING PUPPIES) AND OTHER LEGISLATION  
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (3.43 pm): I rise to make some comments in relation to the Animal Management (Protecting Puppies) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. I note that this bill was reviewed by the Agriculture and Environment Committee, which recommended that this bill be passed.

I place on record my thanks for the hard work of the member for Burnett, the new shadow minister for housing, who has done a fantastic job in relation to this legislation. He has really gone the extra mile to understand the needs and wants of the people who will be affected by this bill. Of course I am talking about our primary producers, who will be affected by the sections of this bill relating to working dogs. Obviously the intent of the bill is to shut down illegal puppy farms. When this bill was introduced, breeders of livestock working dogs were to have been caught up in this unworkable red tape. They felt it would have been quite onerous for them to comply with the legislation.

In my former role as shadow minister for agriculture, fisheries and forestry, I was contacted by representatives of the Working Kelpie Council and the Australian Federation for Livestock Working Dogs. At this point I recognise Mr Gary Milgate and Barbara Cooper from the Working Kelpie Council of Australia and Nancy Withers of the Australian Federation for Livestock Working Dogs, who provided excellent feedback. They highlighted the issues with similar legislation in other states that has impacted their industry. They were worried that this would also be the case here in Queensland.

On a daily basis, many thousands of working dogs make an enormous contribution to the efficiency of livestock management in Australia's large agricultural sector. Quite often it is extremely hard to find a workforce for this sector, particularly in the cattle and sheep industries. While in the past we would have had lots of stockmen doing jobs, now we see trained working dogs doing the work of one or two stockmen. The industry itself makes a conservative estimate that the current contribution of livestock working dogs to the Australian agricultural economy is around \$1 billion per annum. Working dogs are highly valued within these industries, not only as working dogs but also as companions to a lot of the people who work their land by themselves. Their dogs really do help them get through the day and sometimes through long periods of drought.

The working dog sector has its own Australian livestock working dogs code of welfare, which was adopted from the New Zealand government 2010 code of welfare for dogs and the Working Kelpie Council of Australia, with the permission of Animal Welfare in Biosecurity New Zealand.

I congratulate those groups that made hard-copy submissions and that spoke at the public hearings of the committee. That obviously includes the Australian Federation for Livestock Working Dogs, the Queensland Working Cattle Dog Trial Association and the Queensland Working Sheep Dog Association Inc. Writing a submission to a committee is quite an onerous task. Obviously these people are hardworking people and they do not get paid for what they do to help us make good legislation. I always like to thank them.

The groups commended the inclusion in the legislation of the exemptions for livestock working dogs if the breeders meet the criteria of primary producer. This is a very important point. Steve Bennett, in his role as deputy chair, worked really hard with his committee to ensure primary producers got that exemption. It may seem trivial, but it is certainly not, for the reasons I have given.

Obviously many of the members of the organisations I have talked about will be covered by the listed exemptions, but they are concerned that many may not qualify. I think that is of major concern. Obviously these are breeders that are involved in trialling, perhaps living in a semirural area, who breed a few dogs for primary producers, retired farmers who cannot be eligible to be a primary producer anymore, trainers of livestock working dogs to supply to primary producers, stock-handling contractors, musterers and livestock trucking companies.

We all agree that puppy farms and those who profit from having large numbers of breeding dogs kept in poor conditions should be shut down. That is obviously the point of this legislation. While I support the legislation, I would like to put on record that we as legislators need to be so very careful about not creating regulation and legislation just for the sake of it.

In this instance where we can identify a section of the community that may be adversely affected by red tape and this onerous regulation, we need to look at that and take that into consideration whilst we are legislating. I am sure that the minister will take that into consideration over the next couple of years if she does receive complaints from those sections of the community. I would encourage the minister to take those complaints on board and take them for what they are and the genuineness of what these people are doing.