




Speech By
Tony Perrett

MEMBER FOR GYMPIE

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ANIMAL MANAGEMENT (PROTECTING PUPPIES) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (12.24 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Animal Management (Protecting Puppies) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I will address this bill from my background as both a primary producer and a former local government councillor. This goes to the need for primary producers to be able to breed working dogs and the potential financial and administrative impact of burdensome regulation and legislation on local governments.

This bill is about ensuring the welfare of dogs by requiring the registration of dog breeders in order to identify and shut down puppy farms. This bill will institute a compulsory registration system for dog breeders, will clarify what is meant by keeping or using an animal as a kill or lure for blooding or coursing a dog, and makes some technical amendments to the Biosecurity Act 2014. These changes will be achieved by four measures: requiring a person who breeds a dog to register as a breeder within 28 days of the birth of a dog; regulating the supply of dogs by requiring a breeder ID or exemption number to be included in advertisements; clarifying that the offence of blooding applies where an animal is kept or used as a kill or a lure to give a dog its first taste or sight of blood without requiring that the dog receive the sight or taste of blood; and clarifying terminology within the Biosecurity Act.

The committee undertook widespread consultation in investigating this bill. I am pleased that a sensible and workable outcome has been achieved, with the recognition of the position of legitimate and responsible breeders and primary producers. Exemptions will apply if the person is an accredited breeder of an organisation that supplies a unique breeder registration number; is a primary producer breeding a working dog; is a member of a prescribed class of persons; or has another reasonable excuse for not registering within the prescribed period.

As a primary producer and a sometime breeder of working dogs, I can say that this is a common-sense approach to what is a legitimate tool in managing and working rural properties and for mustering stock. I am concerned by the purported motives of animal welfare groups such as Animal Liberation Queensland and Place Advocacy, which called for the exemption to be removed. Groups such as these have no understanding of the work required in legitimately and responsibly managing rural properties. In their pursuit of unreasonable and ideologically driven objectives, they continually seek to undermine Queensland's agricultural industries. We are all well aware of how in some instances groups such as these try to criminalise, persecute and destroy the businesses of primary producers. Thankfully, common sense has prevailed. This bill strikes the right balance between meeting the expectations of Queenslanders in relation to the welfare of animals and the needs of primary producers to carry out established business practices without unnecessary, burdensome regulations.

As we all know, it is no good introducing legislation without establishing sensible and properly funded administrative arrangements to enforce the changes. As a former local government councillor for 12 years, I have often seen state governments cost-shifting the burden of their legislation to local

governments, which struggle to keep up. Over the years, local government in Queensland has had many experiences of assurances from state government about consultation and funding support. Unfortunately, the state's track record is not good. Enforcement of state regulation and legislation has often created many administrative and financial challenges for local councils. There will continue to be legitimate concerns within local governments that ultimately the buck will once again stop with them and not the state government.

The report notes that the implementation of the registration scheme will be ineffective if it is not accompanied by sufficient funding. This is complicated by the fact that it is not known how many active puppy farms there are in Queensland, which means that the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries is unable to make an accurate estimate. The department has estimated the cost as being upwards of \$400,000 at a minimum, not accounting for ongoing expenses. This will include \$250,000 to \$300,000, plus ongoing expenses of \$2,000 per month, for the set-up and maintenance of an online registration system and \$150,000 for a public awareness campaign to ensure customers do not buy dogs advertised or supplied without a breeder registration ID. In addition, the department has also acknowledged that there will be an ongoing cost involved with the enforcement of other acts that will be affected by the provisions of this bill.

It will be necessary to support local government officers and RSPCA inspectors to prosecute violations of the ACP Act and to care for animals rescued during the bringing of legal proceedings against their owners. As no department or organisation is able to estimate the number of puppy farms supplying animals or currently operating in Queensland, it becomes impossible to estimate the ongoing cost of enforcing the bill's provisions. This is why the committee has noted the ongoing consultation with the Local Government Association of Queensland and other stakeholders regarding a compliance strategy to ensure that the provisions of the bill can be appropriately enforced. In concluding my contribution to the debate, I draw the minister's attention to my ongoing interests in the matters I have raised today.