



Speech By
Joseph Kelly

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

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AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (11.50 am): I move—

That the House take note of report No. 35 of the Agriculture and Environment Committee titled *Barrier fences in Queensland* tabled on June 2017.

This report presents the findings of a review that the committee undertook as part of its powers under section 94 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001. I would like to thank those who lodged written submissions and those who took the time to share their views with the committee at its public meetings. I also thank the organisations and landholders who kindly accommodated the committee on its site visits. The committee benefited greatly from witnessing firsthand the issues that landholders are facing and the efforts that are undertaken on a daily basis to keep barrier fences across Queensland in working order.

To that end, I also thank the previous chair of the committee, the member for Stretton. He took me through a visit that he undertook with some of the public servants from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. The member for Stretton was particularly thankful for the time taken by Kevin Strong, Paul Gray, Zane McDonald and Chris Bohun, who took him along—

Mr Pegg: They did a fantastic job.

Mr KELLY: I take that interjection. Yes, they did a fantastic job and they greatly increased our understanding. I became a member of the committee fairly close to the end of its inquiry, but I found it a very interesting process to be involved in. When the committee was visiting Western Queensland on other inquiries, I saw firsthand how much of a difference this fence is making. That really brought to my mind one of the great strengths of the Palaszczuk Labor government, which is that it is a government that listens and puts in place sensible policies. That was also brought home to me as I was walking around in Barcaldine with a local landholder, who was singing the praises of the strategies that we had put in place in relation to fencing. That is also borne out by this committee report.

Certainly, when I am doorknocking in my own electorate I am constantly told and reminded that people much prefer the sensible, steady, good governance that we have been providing as opposed to the absolute chaos that we saw under the previous government. I can only imagine what the chaos would be if we had the LNP and One Nation in power. No doubt, the electors of Queensland will reject that proposal thoroughly, as they did the last time.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr KELLY: No doubt, that is why the member is not standing at the next election. The construction and maintenance of barrier fences has been a key strategy for managing invasive pest species in Queensland since the 1880s. Today, the Queensland government maintains two substantial barrier fences: the wild dog barrier fence and the Darling Downs-Moreton rabbit fence.

Mr Rickuss: The government doesn't; the councils do.

Mr KELLY: Member for Lockyer, you should read the report.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! Member for Greenslopes and member for Lockyer, please direct all your comments through the chair.

Mr KELLY: Madam Deputy Speaker, I appreciate your guidance. The wild dog barrier fence extends for 2,560 kilometres. It is a critical piece of infrastructure that protects the sheep-grazing areas of South and South-West Queensland. The Darling Downs-Moreton rabbit fence extends for 555 kilometres. It is designed to prevent the spread of rabbits from southern and western areas into the protected areas of the Darling Downs, the Lockyer Valley and South-East Queensland. There are also local government administered check fences and privately owned cluster fences, which were also examined by the committee.

The committee looked into the effectiveness of the fences at protecting stock and crops from wild dogs, rabbits and other introduced species. Although there were some concerns about the success of the fences—for example, wild dogs are known to exist within the fenced area—overall, the committee was satisfied that the fences are a critical component of Queensland's pest management program.

The fences require continual patrolling and maintenance to check and repair any damage to them caused by wind, water, fire, animals and other factors. That patrolling and maintenance bring associated costs. At the conclusion of the inquiry the committee was satisfied that both of the barrier fences represented good value for money. These fences are protecting our valuable farming communities and they should be actively maintained as part of Queensland's control strategy for wild dogs and rabbits.

The committee also investigated the management of the fences overseen by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Darling Downs-Moreton Rabbit Board. A number of stakeholders expressed dissatisfaction with the Darling Downs-Moreton Rabbit Board, particularly with regard to precept payments that some local governments are required to pay to go towards the cost of maintaining the fence. The committee believes that the efforts of the Darling Downs-Moreton Bay Rabbit Board are worthy of appreciation. The board has been successful in maintaining the rabbit fence under very difficult circumstances. However, it seems that the board has focused on the maintenance of the fence at the expense of its pest control function. Therefore, the committee recommended that the management structure of the board be reviewed to ensure that it has the capacity—

(Time expired)