




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles
MEMBER FOR MOUNT COOT-THA

Record of Proceedings, 22 March 2017

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Crocodile Management

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (2.36 pm): I would like to update the House that last night at 10 o'clock wildlife officers shot and killed the crocodile believed to be responsible for the death of Warren Hughes. In a joint operation with the Queensland police, EHP's wildlife officers found the aggressive four-metre crocodile at the mouth of the Russell River. I am sure I reflect the views of all members in expressing my condolences to the family and friends of Mr Hughes. I also want to thank our wildlife officers who responded quickly and professionally and who I think we can all agree do a very important and sometimes dangerous job.

Members will also be aware of another crocodile bite, this time not fatal, in Innisfail during the early hours of Sunday morning. Inevitably, these events lead to some calls for extreme responses. I can understand in moments of shock and grief why some people might think culling is a solution. As policymakers though, we need to be informed by the science. Crocodile expert Dr Matt Brien said on Monday—

You can't remove a species that is cryptic, that is wary, that can travel hundreds of kilometres in a few days. The idea that you can do any form of culling and be successful in removing the species is just a fallacy.

This is why we must have a responsible crocodile management strategy for Queensland. Labor's program is based on thorough evidence based research that puts public safety first. Our government has bolstered the crocodile management program, made staff in Central and North Queensland permanent where they were only temporary under the LNP, invested an additional \$5.8 million and funded a multiyear population study to make sure our management approach continues to be informed by the latest science.

Our approach in Cairns has seen more dangerous crocodiles removed than in any other year. Our single and comprehensive management plan makes it easier for the public to know exactly how crocodiles will be handled, no matter where they are in croc country. There is no evidence that any alternative crocodile management options, including culling, would have prevented either of the weekend's incidents from occurring. Sporadically culling would only lull people into believing an area is safer than it really is, and that will only increase the likelihood of another tragedy.

The truth is that there will always be crocodiles in croc country. The best way to ensure your safety is to obey warning signs, keep pets out of the water and never swim in known crocodile habitat. We will continue to work closely with local governments on crocodile management and will host another CrocWise roundtable in Cairns on 30 March.