




Speech By
David Crisafulli

MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

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SAFER WATERWAYS BILL

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (5.48 pm): I rise to speak after the minister. I think it is important to place on record the LNP's views on crocodile management. Both sides of this debate are seeking to portray the LNP's response in a light that is different from the one that we portrayed earlier in the year. The LNP's position is very clear and that is that we will put people before crocodiles. We make no apologies for that. In recent years we have seen a drift away from a common-sense middle ground.

What does the LNP's policy represent? It is pretty simple. It represents an end to this nonsensical KPI of three-month removal. The minister can talk all she likes about averages. If a clear message cannot be sent to those who are charged with the responsibility of removing an animal that you are serious and you want it done in a manner that is swift and can give confidence to those communities, then you are not serious. You cannot achieve what you do not measure. We are serious. The three-month KPI is a joke. It should be three days. That animal must be removed via whatever means necessary. If it can be relocated that is great. If it has to be killed then so be it because people come before crocodiles.

The absurd approach that an animal must be two metres or over before it is removed from key locations also must go. Whose responsibility is it to measure if an animal is 1.95 metres? Do we seriously believe that an animal will not grow and become more aggressive and more dangerous in the years to come? If an animal is in an area that is frequented by humans, if an animal is in an area that is an important location, the animal must be removed regardless of its size. That is putting people before crocodiles.

The LNP's policy advocates a sensible egg-harvesting target which will be done on science. For the minister to compare it to the Northern Territory is not a fair comparison. When our figure is five per cent of the Northern Territory, when our figure does not talk about what locations those eggs should be harvested from based on flood levels, then the science is not being used in the right way and I am not convinced that we cannot do a better job than we are doing.

There is also a golden opportunity for Indigenous communities to have real jobs out of this: the kinds of jobs where they can get up in the morning and go to work in an industry that is worth something, an industry that is not propped up by regulation, a real industry that makes those communities feel empowered. I think that will be tremendous for those communities.

This bill, whilst well intentioned, whilst having elements that I do support, has in it elements that do nothing but ensure that it will be derided and give those who do not understand how important this issue of crocodile removal is the opportunity to scoff at it. One of those elements is this absurd notion of safari hunting. That is too far. That portrays the communities that those who have proposed the bill represent in a manner that I know is not right. Those communities do not want to see safari hunting,

they just want to reclaim what is theirs. They want to be able to go into the areas that they have gone into for years and enjoy them. The bill talks about indiscriminate shooting from the banks of rivers. I will quote from the explanatory notes—

If a crocodile is on their property, they may choose whether to kill it, have it relocated to a farm, or let it remain on their property. If they choose for it to be euthanised, they may do this themselves ...

That goes too far and is not what those in the communities want to see. I understand the retail politics of those who have proposed this bill. I understand why they are trying to put this forward, but I want to get a result that people in Brisbane and my former hometown of Ingham will support. I will tell members why: when the minister talks about hunting the animal to extinction that is an absurdity. These animals right now are nowhere near extinct.

Ms Enoch interjected.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Minister, these animals are nowhere near extinct at the moment. When I hear those opposite say to this House that study after study shows there has been no increase in crocodiles, that is offensive to those communities. Where I grew up there are areas where I was prepared to swim as a child that I would not let my children swim in now. The reason is simple: there has been an explosion in numbers of crocodiles. That is real. That is what we are seeing every day. To somehow evoke the language of 'hunting the animal to extinction' is as absurd a statement as talking about safari hunting.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is a bit too much conversation across the chamber.

Mr CRISAFULLI: When I hear the sentence, 'This is croc country,' and see advertising dollars being spent telling people why they should and should not do a myriad of things, that gets me angry. It is not croc country; it belongs to people. There are areas that people have enjoyed for decades and can no longer enjoy. What I am proposing is people before crocodiles. I am proposing that when an animal comes into that area it is removed. I am not proposing indiscriminate hunting, safaris, wild west shooting from the banks of the river but a restoration of a pecking order where it is not croc country, but people's country—an area for North Queenslanders to go and swim, go for a paddle and do all the things they have for generations that have been taken off them.

The LNP will continue to advocate for what is a sensible middle ground, for what every Queenslanders should want—that is, for every Queenslanders to obtain a lifestyle and the security they need. If there is an attack and it is in a high-profile area and it is filmed on an iPhone, the damage it will do to the tourism industry in Far North Queensland will be irreparable. It will never recover from that.

Mr Harper interjected.

Mr CRISAFULLI: It will never recover from that! If it were to occur on the Esplanade in Cairns or the Strand in Townsville, the damage done would be massive. What the LNP is putting forward is a removal of the animals in those high-profile areas, in those important areas, in those areas that mean so much to people's lifestyle. We are not proposing safari hunting and we are not proposing shooting from banks of rivers; we are proposing a KPI that ensures the removal of these animals and the department will be held to account. At the moment the department has a minister who operates on auto pilot. The department needs to be held to account. It needs strong KPIs, not the kind of KPIs where the minister turns up to estimates and acts as the spokesperson and cheerleader for the department but the kind where the minister sets the agenda, where the minister says that people come before crocodiles. We propose a three-day KPI and we will do that. We will not be supporting this bill, but we will continue to put forward a policy that puts people before crocodiles.