




Speech By  
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**MEMBER FOR TRAEGER**

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**NATURE CONSERVATION (SPECIAL WILDLIFE RESERVES) AND OTHER  
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (3.24 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Nature Conservation (Special Wildlife Reserves) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I cast my mind back to a couple of weeks ago, when I was shown a map of Cape York that included all of the wildlife reserves, national parks and state forests. When you put all of them together there is not much left. I put that together with a conversation that I had with Freddy Pascoe in Normanton last year. We were talking about the effects of ice and how to get kids engaged. He said, 'Rob, money's no longer an incentive. The only carrot I can think of for these kids is cattle work. We have the benefit of Delta Downs around Normanton, so we can put those kids out to cattle work.'

Speaking from my own experience, I think that is true. People love to engage in productive activities and meaningful work, and I think that many people in those areas yearn for the opportunity to prosper, but it is lacking. There is a role for rangers in those areas, and the Carpentaria land rangers do a terrific job, but often trying to control weeds and pests out there is just like a drop in the ocean. Unfortunately, we mostly rely on the leaseholders up there on grazing leases to at least try and maintain weeds and pests at no cost to the taxpayer. It works out very well for all of us, but unfortunately I see the continual tension between the people who live up there, who want the right to prosper and go forward and do the activities that they want, and the ideologies that filter out of this place and impose themselves up there. We have seen a continuation of that with this bill.

Another thing that raises concern is the proposed ban on transshipping in the cape area. For example, silica is an inert product so there is no risk to the reef. You could have a similar size tourist vessel coming into a miniport. A miniport is 100 metres wide at best. Even if we are just talking about a barge ramp for a miniport, if it is for a tourist vessel bringing people in there is no problem. If the material changes and you put silica sand in it, it would no longer be allowed. Therefore, if anyone up there wants the opportunity to try to get ahead and make some money—and I am talking about the first Australians in this case—they will be denied. This is a case of ideologies that are continually being imposed, so it is very worrying.

I can see firsthand in my own electorate where we are losing control of prickly acacia, calotrope and feral cats. The rangers do a very good job with the pigs up in the gulf, but they are still a very widespread problem and they are very costly. When you have leaseholders paying \$30,000 or \$40,000 a year in lease rent to the government and they are doing all of that work for you for free because it is in their interest as well, that is a pretty good outcome. I think it is poor government policy to remove that opportunity. It is certainly not welcome. It denies Queenslanders in the north economic opportunities that the rest of the state has enjoyed throughout the history of Queensland. In the future we will be denied those opportunities if this bill is passed, and on that basis we oppose the bill.