



Speech By  
**Shane Knuth**


**MEMBER FOR HILL**

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## ADJOURNMENT

### Crocodiles

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (6.12 pm): In June 2016, the government made a big deal about allocating \$5.8 million over three years for crocodile management, including a comprehensive monitoring program to study crocodile populations. Over five years later, after constant questioning from the KAP, a short, glossy, eight-page brochure was delivered. The brochure provides a wide estimate of crocodile numbers in the waterways of North Queensland and stated an average of 1.7 crocodiles per kilometre of rivers surveyed, and 1.2 crocodiles per kilometre in the Cairns region. Another finding was that the Northern Territory has three times the crocodile population, with the report trying to infer that Queensland's crocodile problem is not so bad after all. I would hardly call that comprehensive or a valid use of taxpayers' money.

If I were a business owner who gave \$5.8 million to a company which took five years to produce an eight-page brochure, I would be pretty angry and would demand my money back. It appears that the report has been delivered on the run and that the findings are in direct conflict to everyday feedback on what is happening on the ground in Far North Queensland. Did the department talk to any fishermen in Far North Queensland? I have, and they have informed me that at night they can count up to 17 crocodiles within one kilometre in the Russell River alone. I was at the Russell River the other day and there were two crocodiles at the boat ramp!

It is now common knowledge that anyone who tries to swim across any section of any major river in Far North Queensland will not make it to the other side. Those living in Far North Queensland are sick and tired of hearing when crocodiles are reported in populated waterways that the department will monitor the crocodile to see if it presents any danger. Any crocodile in any populated waterway is dangerous and should be immediately removed. The reality is that the government's crocodile management plan is a dismal failure. The millions in funding spent over the past five years could instead have been used to employ more Indigenous rangers, establish an effective egg-harvesting program and open a Queensland crocodile authority based in Far North Queensland to deal with crocodile issues locally.

I clarify that the KAP has never in the past supported—nor ever would support—the widespread, unchecked slaughter of crocodiles which occurred in the 1970s; however, we will continue to advocate for a more proactive approach to crocodile management that will see the problem dealt with locally instead of in an office tower in Brisbane. Both major parties previously opposed our bill but still have not provided a solution that meets community expectations. I will be submitting a revised safer waterways bill on behalf of the KAP to address the shortfalls in the current program.