




Speech By  
**Charis Mullen**

**MEMBER FOR JORDAN**

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### **NATURE CONSERVATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (12.21 pm): I am pleased to rise and make a contribution to the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. The bill has a number of objectives, the primary one being to meet an election commitment providing a 20-year extension to allow beekeeping in specified national parks to continue until 31 December 2044. There are also a range of additional amendments and changes to the Nature Conservation Act and Wet Tropics Act.

Commercial beekeeping has been in place in a number of national parks since the early 2000s resulting from the transfer of state forests to national parks as agreed under the South East Queensland Forests Agreement. There are currently more than 1,000 apiary sites across 49 of Queensland's national parks. As the parliamentary report indicates, most of the common sites are in natural clearings, logging dumps or gravel pits. It is important to recognise that commercial beekeeping is migratory, with beehives transported to multiple areas to meet the nutritional needs of the bees.

The Queensland Beekeepers' Association provided a comprehensive explanation of how this works with many beekeepers and their diverse portfolios of apiary sites across different land tenures, floral resource types and geographical areas. The association also submitted that national parks provide a safe refuge for bees from potentially dangerous urban and agricultural environments, including from the use of harmful pesticides and the impact of monocultures on the bee diets.

It is recognised that our honey bee industry is absolutely vital from an economic perspective. At the Queensland Beekeepers' Association event in the Queensland parliament in May this year, we heard that in Australia 35 horticultural industries depend on the pollination services of honey bees for the majority of their production, representing a \$14.2 billion contribution to the national economy each year. Growcom submitted that pollination services in Queensland are absolutely essential to the continued success and expansion of the horticulture sector, contributing approximately \$3 billion to the state economy and supporting over 20,000 jobs across the region.

In relation to the extension which allows beekeeping to continue in specified national parks for the next 20 years, I note the concerns of a number of conservation groups and appreciate that there is some inconsistency with the cardinal principle of national parks which is to 'provide, to the greatest possible extent, for the permanent preservation of the area's natural condition and the protection of the area's cultural resources and values'.

The parliamentary inquiry has provided some important and valuable information on potential impacts associated with the use of national park sites for beekeeping. It is good to see the department confirming further work on the development and adoption of a code of practice for beekeeping on protected areas to address some of the issues which have been raised.

I also note the committee's view that more substantial progress should have been made over the past 20 years to identify and acquire alternative apiary sites. It is important to progress a clear strategy and plan to deal with this matter during the life of the 20-year extension.

I do not agree with the opposition's view as outlined in its statement of reservation that the end date of 2044 should be scrapped and licensed beekeepers should be able to access national parks in perpetuity. A 20-year extension is entirely reasonable and recognises that environments and industries change over time, as recognised by the When Bee Foundation with a number of initiatives that could help reduce dependency on floral resources in national parks.

I cannot let pass this opportunity, when we are talking about bees and this important industry, to recognise some very special people in my electorate working to increase our knowledge of bees and their value and also offering some very delicious honey products.

Spring Mountain Honey is a wonderful, local, family owned business in the Greenbank area producing tasty raw honey. Kate, her dad, husband and mum—everyone helps—have a lovely business that really ensures that their beekeeping practices are bee friendly. As they say, 'They respect the bees and make sure their health comes first.'

Spring Mountain Honey only extract when all honey is capped and there is plenty of honey in the hive for the bees. They do not use any chemicals in or around the hives, and do not heat or filter their honey. They have hives around the local area—in Greenbank, Park Ridge, Munruben and Jimboomba. I love seeing Kate at the various markets and community events. We always have Spring Mountain Honey in our home, but I also love to use Kate's local products for our special raffles and events.

Another wonderful business is Bee All Natural. Jason and Natasha Roebig are really well known in our community and deservedly so. They are absolutely passionate about continuing the age-old techniques adopted from generations of beekeepers who have practised sustainable, natural and organic methods. Jason and Natasha are also official #eatqld champions with the Queensland government and are really committed to local produce and using only the most natural of ingredients.

Their products are of the highest taste and quality and were recently swarmed with awards at the Ekka, taking out all three podium spots in the creamed honey contest and a range of other honey awards. Their products are just incredible—from the honey itself to the beauty products and their famous peanut brittle, which is so addictive that there really should be a warning. I love spending time with the Roebigs. Their enthusiasm and drive in sharing their knowledge of bees with our broader community and particularly children is so admirable.

During the recent school holidays, they were part of the Logan City Council's KRANK program. They ran a pilot workshop in the last holidays which proved so popular they came back for more. Alongside teaching attendees about the technical aspects of beekeeping, including the lifecycle of bees and how honey is extracted, the Roebigs say they stress the importance of responsible beekeeping and encouraging a new generation to take up the trade.

The bill before us provides further certainty to the industry regarding the location of their hives and recognises the incredible importance of bees and beekeeping to Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.