




Speech By  
**Dale Last**

**MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN**

---

Record of Proceedings, 12 October 2022

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

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (12.37 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. In the interests of transparency, I point out that I am a beekeeper.

**Ms Pease:** Where's our honey?

**Mr LAST:** I can look after any requests for honey. I am glad the minister is here. My bees are probably harvesting pollen from Bowling Green Bay National Park given the proximity of the national park to where I live.

It is an important industry. Bees fulfil a vital role in our ecosystems around the state. I note that under the Nature Conservation Act beekeeping is inconsistent with the cardinal principle for national parks which requires national parks to be managed 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 fact remains that, without access to these national parks, a lot of our beekeepers would not be sustainable. They need access to national parks.

Quite often there is a twofold purpose in beekeepers accessing national parks. Not only does it keep tracks and fire trials open and accessible; beekeepers are an extra set of eyes and ears. A retired police officer in Bowen, Mark Inmon, is a beekeeper with a very large number of hives in that area. How good is it that we have a retired police officer travelling around with his bee hives being another set of eyes and ears for what goes on in national parks.

I have one of the largest horticultural industries in the state around Bowen and the Burdekin. Without our beekeepers that industry would flounder. That industry would not be sustainable. A lot of growers consistently call for more beekeepers and more access to bees in order to pollinate their crops. They fulfil a vital role in my neck of the woods.

One of Australia's largest beekeepers—Graeme Armstrong, who trades as G&A Apiaries Australia Pty Ltd—lives in my electorate at Brandon. He travels throughout the state. It is his full-time occupation. On that note, I support what the shadow minister is doing. Twenty years may sound like a long time, but the amendment allowing beekeepers to access national parks in perpetuity has a lot of merit in terms of giving operators like Graeme Armstrong the certainty that they need going forward of long-term accessibility to national parks. If there are succession plans—and quite often there are in a lot of these families—they give those families the certainty that they need to continue a career in the bee industry and they give them an opportunity moving forward to have long-term employment opportunities as well. Beekeepers want certainty for future generations. As I have said, I will be supporting the shadow minister's amendment.

There are some other amendments that we have not necessarily touched on. If I put my shadow minister for police's hat on, amendments to the Forestry Act and the Marine Parks Act—allowing new offences for impersonating officers and rangers and for obstructing officers and the functions of an inspector—are important. We need to give surety to staff who work in those industries. We need to

make sure they have the powers that they need to do their jobs properly. It is a serious offence if someone is in those areas impersonating officers and rangers. I support those amendments regarding the provision of offences for impersonating and obstructing officers and rangers in those particular areas and the powers that relate thereto.

There is not much more I want to say, except that I fully support our beekeepers in being allowed to access national parks and state forest areas. If we want to keep the industry alive and well in this state then we certainly need to ensure that we continue that accessibility going forward.