




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

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NATURE CONSERVATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (5.05 pm): I rise to support the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill as somebody who loves honey, loves food and has also learned an awful lot this week about how those things are made.

While doing a bit of research I came across an article in the *Brisbane Times* from last year that summarised very well some of the key issues that we are talking about today. I will share some of that information with the House today. They mention in the article that Queensland beekeepers maintain that every third mouthful of food that a Queenslander eats needs honey bees to pollinate it. We have talked a lot about the vast amount of produce that we have in Queensland and that produce that requires pollination by honey bees, but when you put it like that it really throws into stark relief that none of us here would be eating today if it were not for the humble honey bee. The humble honey bee, along with rain, good soil and sunshine, is one of the key ingredients of Queensland's multibillion dollar fruit and vegetable industry.

As a person who has worked in the hospitality industry, we were proud to put Queensland produce on our menus. Whether it was carrots from Kalbar, beautiful macadamia nuts or Mareeba coffee beans—which got a look-in on our dessert menu for a while—we are spoilt for choice in Queensland. I must say that I did not realise the extent to which the humble honey bee was involved in that process. We are incredibly lucky.

According to this article, it is estimated that the honey bee alone contributes about \$2.4 billion to the state's economy annually. These little fellas are doing a lot of heavy lifting. About 75 per cent of Queensland's beekeeping industry clusters around the Lockyer Valley, which we know to be a food bowl with beautiful carrots, tomatoes and all the other food that they produce; Toowoomba; the Scenic Rim; up into the Wide Bay Burnett; and the Gympie areas. I think all of the members for those communities have spoken or will be speaking on the bill.

Bees need healthy flowering plants. We heard earlier from the member for Rockhampton, who members will be aware is a keen amateur apiarist. He talked about how he was able to see firsthand that having that bee colony improved the health of his plants and flowers. I understand that today over 1,000 professional apiary sites are located in 49 Queensland national parks. They are not just located in national parks. I am very lucky to have in my community at Corinda State High School an agriculture program and through that agriculture program they run an apiary. They have two ways that they run that: they have a young student who runs a small business—or should I say 'buzziness'—through the school; and the school also creates its own honey.

Some people—like my mum—say that the best way to get your bee honey is locally. Some people believe that bee honey that is harvested from your local area is more likely to have the health benefits that you need because it has the local cultures and the local bacteria.

I am not New Zealand born, but my father is from New Zealand and he will always get Manuka honey. I do not know how I am going to go home after parliament and break the news to my father that Manuka honey might, in fact, be an Australian product. I think that might break his heart and rock his world view. That is shocking news and I will have to do more research on it. That would be big news in the Pugh household because we love our Manuka honey. It is expensive but it is worth it.

As I said, in my electorate there are a number of beekeepers separate to the school, which does an amazing job educating the next generation of beekeepers. I thank the Corinda State High School for their program. It is a really good program that is run through the agriculture unit at the school. There are several beekeeper groups in my community and some people who own their own apiaries. It really is a wonderful and important profession.

Judging by the number of members from both sides of the House who offered to speak on the bill, we have all enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about what the humble honey bee has contributed not just to our national parks but also to our economy. We must make sure that the sector has a strong future for the next 20 years. That is why I certainly will be supporting the bill and I commend it to the House.