




Speech By
Joseph Kelly

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

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NATURE CONSERVATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (4.25 pm): Sixteen years from now would have been when we would have been receiving the first funding for the fake Bradfield Scheme or the upgraded Bruce Highway, so 16 years is in fact quite a long way off. Thankfully the LNP did not get elected and they were not able to implement either of those ridiculous schemes.

I support this bill. We have had yet another LNP speaker on their feet castigating the government for apparently dragging their feet. They did not bother to acknowledge the fact that when the LNP were in government and had the opportunity to make changes, they did absolutely nothing. Why would that be? Would that be because their priorities were elsewhere? Would that be because their priorities were on sacking over 600 members of the agricultural workforce? Would it be because you sacked those 600 members of the agricultural workforce that you did not have the actual staff to do the work? Would that be because when we got into government after your mercifully short time in government that we actually had to rebuild those systems? I think that might actually be a factor.

We have had quite a lot of firsts in Australian politics over the last few weeks—the former prime minister who apparently was the secret minister for everything. Sadly, he left the ‘minister for silly walks’ off his secret list. Then in this place this week, we had a shadow cabinet that does not actually meet. Now we have opposition members of a parliamentary committee—

Mr O’CONNOR: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. I thought the Deputy Speaker, of all members, would know that this is not within the long title.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Member, can I please ask you to explain how your speech relates to the long title of the bill?

Mr KELLY: I thank you for the opportunity to do that, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I thank the member for bringing me to that relevance point. I will come to the members of the parliamentary committee who have submitted a statement of reservation in relation to this bill, and I would like to discuss that statement of reservation.

Just as we had the former prime minister for everything, secret ministries, and the shadow cabinet that does not meet, we now have a parliamentary committee whose opposition members submit a statement of reservation that does not actually contain any reservations. It is another first in Australian politics. They support the bill; they wrote it in their statement of reservations. I had to read it three or four times because I was thinking, ‘It seems like they just agree with what the government is doing.’ If you read it, you will find it buried deep in there and I will get to that in a minute.

We all understand the importance of bees to our daily life. I start most of my days with a bit of honey on my cereal, as do many people in this place. Bees are much more important than allowing me to have a daily healthy sugar hit in my diet. Without their pollinating powers, we have no food.

I would like to acknowledge those members of the Queensland Beekeepers’ Association in the gallery who have been patiently waiting all day and finally are getting to hear this bill debated. I will get to some of the issues that I think are important in relation to this debate.

Many years ago I had the great pleasure of meeting with Murray Arkadieff from the Queensland Beekeepers' Association who was the first to alert me to the concerns of beekeepers around the South East Queensland Forests Agreement expiring and what that meant for their industry. I certainly took their concerns to the Minister for Agriculture and to the Minister for Environment. I would like to thank those ministers for taking these issues seriously and responding to them. I am pleased to see that beekeepers will continue to have access to national parks to ensure healthy hives and ongoing pollination capacity which is so important to our agriculture sector.

When we look at the table on page 9 of the report we see just how reliant we are on the pollination of honey bees for our daily fruit and vegetables as well as for our many other agricultural products. I do note the concerns raised by the Friends of Nerang National Park in their submission. They would no doubt have much in common with the great members of the Mount Gravatt Environment Group, who run the Pollinator Link that tries to promote pollination, and certainly share those concerns about competition for nesting spaces. I welcome that recommendation from the committee to find alternatives to national parks.

I can also see why various submitters wanted longer access to national parks than is contained in the legislation. It is my view that, given the current environmental changes we face, signing up to perpetual, or ongoing, access would be completely unwise. We are seeing rapid changes in land use as we respond to climate change. This situation is likely to become more volatile as we go forward with governments needing the capacity to be agile rather than being locked into perpetual agreements.

With a change in federal government, we are seeing increased action on climate change. Just today it was refreshing to hear the environment minister, Tanya Plibersek, talking about the possibility of putting a proper value on negative externalities and the environment. There is significant movement in Europe, with the EU, for the first time ever, issuing bonds in response to the global pandemic and angling those bonds heavily towards energy transformation and action on climate change. China, the US, Latin America and our near neighbours in Indonesia and the Pacific are all moving on climate change. What does this mean? It is possible with so much action on climate change that landholders may start to find financially viable ways to create spaces on agricultural land to create alternative apiary sites, as foreseen by recommendation 2 of this report.

Of course, if the Greens had not backed the federal LNP, we would probably be doing this right now because we would have had an ET scheme in place and that would have made it possible. Now, sadly, thanks to the Greens and the LNP locking up together, we have wasted over a decade. At least now the Greens have backed federal Labor's climate action plan which acknowledges that we will need to continue to use coal, gas and petroleum as we transition—

Mr KRAUSE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance under standing order 118(b). I do not know how this relates to the bees.

Mr FURNER: I rise to a point of order. The member for Greenslopes is directly referring to recommendation 2 of the report that clearly looks at alternative arrangements with respect to housing bees into the future.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have been listening closely and the member is on track.

Mr KELLY: The minister for agriculture has clearly been listening carefully, too, and I thank the minister for his interest.

With 'Furner the Farmer's Friend' leading the way, the Palaszczuk Labor government will always back businesses big and small in the agricultural sector, whether they are producing food, fibre, fuel or medicines. This bill provides certainty for the beekeeping sector and points a way forward in terms of developing a sustainable industry going forward. It also allows us to have that capacity to pivot and change as inevitably the situation will change brought about by responses to climate change as we move forward. I commend the bill to the House.