




Speech By
Lance McCallum

MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA

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NATURE CONSERVATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL


 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (4.55 pm): It gives me great pleasure to contribute to the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. It certainly is a pleasure to follow the member for Burleigh and his industrious contribution to this debate where he suggested that over 20 years there has been a lack of work undertaken to find alternative sites for apiaries and beehives. I would note that over that 20-year period there have been several changes of governments and I would like to know exactly what the LNP did in relation to that matter during the time it was in government. It is clear—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr McCALLUM: We will get to that a little bit later. It is clear that beekeeping does play an important and valuable role and that national parks are providing conditions that are necessary for honey bees to thrive. The primary objective of this bill delivers on an election commitment in 2020 that the government took to the people of Queensland and received a mandate for to look at allowing beekeeping in specified national parks to continue up to 31 December 2024.

With regard to beekeeping in Queensland national parks, there are currently around 1,088 apiary sites across 49 of Queensland's national parks, with the most common sites in those national parks being in natural clearings, logging dumps or gravel pits. There are many constituents in Bundamba who are active participants in beekeeping and aviary sites. I know that many members in this place will have constituents who participate as avid apiarists. When it comes to the Bundamba community, I note that the Gatton National Park currently has three sites and the Lockyer National Park has 38 apiary sites. I have had some discussions with Bundamba constituents around the issue of apiaries and the beekeeping industry in Queensland in our national parks.

At the beginning of my contribution I want to acknowledge that when it came to the committee inquiry process into this bill the majority of stakeholders who took the time to participate in the inquiry supported the bill. However, there were some submissions from environmental groups which raised concerns with the bill and that beekeeping in national parks was against some of the fundamental principles that national parks have and that it has a detrimental impact, and I will make some more comments about that later. However, it is clear that national parks do provide a safe place for bees that is free from chemicals which can be used for a range of activities.

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (5.54 pm), continuing: National parks provide us with a place for bees which can be used for a range of activities including the preparation of hives for crop pollination, hive recovery after pollination, overwintering and generating honey to provide income when there is no

pollination work to be done. It is acknowledged that there is the potential for negative impacts on beehives from agricultural pesticides and arrangements for land sharing involving the assessment of the use of those chemicals.

It is important to note the role that honey bees play in the horticultural and food industries. The Queensland honey bee industry produces honey and other products that are valued at \$64 million. Honey production has been the major focus of Queensland beekeepers for many, many years, but the significant growth in horticultural industries has seen a big increase in the demand for paid pollination services. In fact, the Queensland Beekeepers' Association advise that honey bee pollination provided an estimated average of \$2.1 billion in economic value for Queensland in the 2014-15 financial year.

As I mentioned in my earlier remarks, there are those submitters who raised concerns about the practice of beekeeping in our national parks; namely, that it is basically fundamentally inconsistent with national park management. Some conservation groups did provide submissions opposing the extension of beekeeping in national parks. Some of the issues that were raised included that honey bees are an introduced and exotic species and compete with native bees as well as the impact on vegetation from their presence in national parks and particularly the impact of honey bees on tree hollows. There was some discussion of the efforts to identify alternative sites for the bee industry. The member for Burleigh touched on this in his contribution, which could be described as an attempted pollination of this debate. However, it does appear that providing an extension of up to 20 years to existing arrangements for beekeeping to occur on particular national parks is appropriate. It is important to note that this extension only applies to areas where beekeeping was an existing use prior to the transfer of the land into national park estate.

That said, the committee did make some recommendations: No. 1 that the bill be passed; No. 2 that the Department of Environment and Science develop some guidelines for beekeeping in national parks within the next year and adopt a strategy to plan, identify and secure alternative apiary sites over the period of any 20-year extension.

It is also worth noting that, when it comes to a commitment to national parks, the Palaszczuk Labor government has done more for the expansion and protection of our national parks than has ever been done in Queensland, including: \$262.5 million for new national parks, which is the largest investment in Queensland's history; \$140 million over the next 40 years for national park management; and 148 hectares on the southern Gold Coast for what will be one of the biggest ecoparks in the nation. Last year we committed to 54 new First Nations rangers, which is further evidence of our commitment to national parks and, importantly, our commitment to a cultural connection to those national parks.

In summary, I would like to thank the minister for bringing the bill forward. I would like to acknowledge and thank the State Development and Regional Industries Committee, which is chaired by the equal best chair in the parliament, the member for Bancroft.

Ms McMillan: Be careful.

Mr McCALLUM: I did say 'equal best'. I will keep the House guessing as to who he is equal with. I commend the bill to the House.