




Speech By
Hon. Leeanne Enoch

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

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NATURE CONSERVATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts) (12.41 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution in support of the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. I reflect on much of the contributions from other members across the chamber to this bill.

I think back to myself as a young child first understanding the role of the bee in agriculture and, of course, in the production of honey. As a small child visiting farms on Minjerribah, North Stradbroke Island, from the very first time that I understood what honeycomb was and the production of honey from beehives I understood the role of bees in our agricultural sector and the role of bees in our community more broadly in our landscape and in our environment.

Today, as we debate this particular bill—and understanding that the primary purpose of the bill is to deliver on that commitment that this government made to the Queensland beekeeping industry at the last state election—I also reflect on the fact that at every point we need to ensure that we are striking that thriving balance in the way that we go forward, that we are striking the balance between economic outcomes and environmental outcomes. Not everybody will be happy with regard to the some of those outcomes, but the balance has to be struck. I think that this bill does exactly that. As the former minister for the environment, I am very pleased to see the certainty provided to the Queensland beekeeping industry as part of the amendments to this bill. I think that that very much strikes that balance that I speak of.

I also enjoyed working closely with the Queensland Beekeepers' Association—in particular, Jo Martin—to put in place the framework for this commitment to be realised. These amendments to the Nature Conservation Act formally extend beekeeping permits for a further 20 years in certain national parks—those that were created as part of the South East Queensland Forests Agreement in 1999. Current arrangements require apiarists to transition out of national parks by the end of 2024. However, alternative suitable honey sites are yet to be achieved.

I acknowledge the Beekeepers' Association work in all of this. I know that the team have been working with First Nations groups, traditional owners and others to be able to find those suitable alternatives. I know that that work will be ongoing. I acknowledge all of the work that everybody has been doing to identify those suitable sites. I know that it has been a lot of hard work and sometimes difficult in terms of adjusting relationships that they may have had in the past. Relationships with traditional owners in particular are incredibly important with regard to those sites. In recognition of this—and with the 2024 cut-off date in sight—our government stepped in to prevent the loss of apiary sites in national parks without a viable alternative.

Passage of this bill will deliver on our government's commitment to grant a 20-year extension to allow beekeeping on national parks until 31 December 2044 in areas where beekeeping was an existing use prior to the transfer of land to national park. That means our beekeeping industry in Queensland can keep producing world-class honey and therefore continue to contribute the approximately \$2.4 billion to the Queensland economy each year.

We know it is incredibly important to strike, as I say, the right balance when protecting the flora, fauna and ecosystems of our national parks while also providing certainty for industry. The amendments to the act will support the continuation of beekeeping in certain national parks while the government works with industry and other stakeholders to identify alternative sites for the future relocation of beekeeping off national parks. The bill before the House today will also make amendments to five acts and four regulations to deliver a number of outcomes regarding the future management and administration of Queensland's wildlife and protected areas such as state forests, recreation areas, marine parks and national parks.

I want to wholeheartedly acknowledge the State Secretary of the Queensland Beekeepers' Association, Jo Martin; the executive of the Queensland Beekeepers' Association; and particularly all of the members of the association for their strong advocacy for beekeepers and for this important industry in Queensland. I acknowledge the committee and I acknowledge the Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs for delivering on this commitment to the beekeeping industry in such a balanced way. Again, I acknowledge all of those who have been working so hard to strike that thriving balance to ensure that we are not only protecting industry but also protecting our wildlife and our natural resources.