



Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR MILLER

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NATURE CONSERVATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (4.39 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The bill takes a precautionary approach to the impact of European honey bees on Queensland's protected areas. A central principle of Queensland's national park management strategy is to preserve the natural condition, as much as practicable. Beekeeping introduces non-native European honey bees into national parks, and those European honey bees compete with native honey bees within these precincts.

While I support the relocation of European honey beehives outside of national parks and protected areas, I am also aware that the beekeeping industry provides cross-pollination services and produces honey and other honey bee related products. The loss of access to national park sites, as scheduled in 2024, would have a detrimental impact on the supply of pollination services and on our state's role as a supplier of quality food and fibre products to the nation and the world. That is why I support the 20-year extension to the framework to allow European honey beehives in national parks while we take steps to identify areas to transition to outside of national parks.

Pollination services provided by apiarists and their hives can result in increased yields and better quality produce for food producers. Commercial apiarists need somewhere to locate hives to once the hard work of pollinating a particular crop is done for another season. As a significant landholder, my Department of Transport and Main Roads was happy to accept the Department of Environment and Science's invitation to participate in an interagency beekeeping working group. The working group was established as a result of an election commitment made in 2020 to extend beekeepers' access to national park apiary sites by 20 years, until 31 December 2044.

In support of the beekeeping industry, the Department of Environment and Science is developing a transition plan to identify suitable alternative sites outside of national parks. The Department of Environment and Science sought TMR's participation in the working group, as alternative sites outside national parks may involve identifying locations on state controlled roads. To assist the beekeeping community, TMR permits beehives on state controlled road corridors as long as they meet requirements. The requirements focus, of course, on maintaining primarily the safety of road users. TMR's beehive requirements are available on our website under the title 'Bee hives in state-controlled road corridors'.

In order to place beehives in a state controlled road corridor, the person must hold a road corridor permit. There is already high demand for beehive locations along our state controlled road corridors. Therefore, beehive road corridor permits are not issued on a permanent basis. Generally, a permit is issued for a 12-month period; however, a hive must be placed in the specified location within six months of the permit being issued. The placement of the hives must not interfere with the safe or efficient operation of the road. This includes the location of the hives as well as the activities and the vehicle movements associated with the hives in terms of delivery, removal, harvesting and maintenance.

Hives must be 200 metres away from neighbouring buildings, structures, bus stops, drop-off areas, footpaths and so on, and three metres from an adjacent fenced property boundary. TMR regularly consults with the beekeeping industry and has been an active member of the Bee Industry Consultative Committee over 15 years.

I note that the committee report recommends that the bill be passed and that the Department of Environment and Science adopt a clear strategy and plan to identify and secure alternative apiary sites outside of national parks over the period of the 20-year extension. The Department of Transport and Main Roads will support our apiarists and our food producers and support this transition. I commend the Department of Environment and Science, which is also working with industry to develop a standard landholder agreement template. This will be for beekeepers operating on lands where there is no existing permitting framework.

The bill also introduces measures to enhance compliance capability under the legislation. It is important that a person who falsely represents themselves as a Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service officer should be able to be prosecuted. I also think authorities should be empowered to prosecute individuals who are obstructing the activities of one of our QPWS workers. I support the measures to respond to those issues.

From the Daintree Rainforest and the Great Barrier Reef in the north to the sandy beaches of our Gold and Sunshine coasts or the Dinosaur Stampede National Monument at Lark Quarry Conservation Park, Queensland's extraordinary natural assets are worth preserving and protecting, which is what part of this bill is about. I commend this bill to the House.