



Speech By  
**Stephen Andrew**


**MEMBER FOR MIRANI**

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**PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT**

**Cape York, Cattle Management**

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (2.43 pm): I wish to continue speaking about the shooting of cattle by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service on Cape York. These indiscriminate culls of cattle have been a regular occurrence on the peninsula ever since the government bought Rokeby Station in 1981. Affected landholders were told that cattle would be shot along the river courses and park boundaries just five days beforehand. I was told by the minister today that they had 15 days, but I have also been told that it usually takes 50 days for people to get a permit to muster their cattle.

Many graziers are reluctant to speak out for fear of retribution from the government. Most are living in fear of having their leases on Cape York taken from them. The government, meanwhile, is saying that these were unbranded cows and that the shooter was so accurate that the animals would not have suffered. That is ridiculous. Any experienced aerial shooter will tell you that it is impossible to judge from the air whether or not galloping cattle in thick vegetation have been branded.

Last year, Coen residents saw along a bush track dead cattle that had been shot from a helicopter. From what I was told, residents said that several cows, calves and bulls had been indiscriminately gut-shot or shot in the legs and elsewhere and there were no single-shot kills. It takes cattle days to die, in agony. It is terrible. Over the past three years, up to 5,000 cattle have been slaughtered on orders from the Queensland government. That is about \$6 million worth in today's market. Someone in government needs to account for this. Why did this slaughter happen, who authorised it and why is the Queensland government so zealous about killing cattle while countless other feral animals rampage through our parks? I spoke to the minister about feral pigs at the last estimates. There has been some \$106 million worth of damage and \$925,000 has been spent to address the issue—about 0.73 per cent of the damage value.

The fact is that cattle grazing in our national parks is known to have a number of benefits, mostly in reducing the risk of bad fires that kill koalas and native animals. If lethal measures were needed to cull the cattle, it should have been done in a much more effective and humane way. We could have trapped these animals and used them for something. The indiscriminate shooting of this valuable resource was an absolute waste, in my opinion. Those animals could have entered the food chain and be—of benefit to—any. Instead, they were left to rot or be fed on by predators, expanding the food chain for pest animals.

With the world's supply chain in gridlock and food shortages looming, this government needs to do a lot more to protect the livelihood of our farmers. Across Cape York Peninsula, the cattle-grazing industry has declined drastically, mostly due to land tenure changes. The government should give producers tenure security. They should stop driving a stake through the economic heart of our regions—that is, our farmers.