




Speech By
Barry O'Rourke

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

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LAND AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (4.53 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. While this bill amends several areas, I will only speak to the amending of the Stock Route Management Act. These amendments cover a number of areas to assist in the effective management of stock routes, particularly supporting local governments.

Stock routes in Queensland have a long and complex history dating back to the early days of European settlement in Australia. In the mid-19th century Queensland was a largely rural and agricultural state and the movement of stock was a critical part of the economy. The first stock routes in Queensland were established in the 1860s to facilitate the movement of cattle from the remote interior of the state to markets on the coast. These routes were often little more than tracks through wilderness and drovers faced many challenges along the way, including tough terrain and unpredictable weather. Over time the Queensland government began to establish more formalised stock routes with the designation of public reserves for the movement of livestock. These routes were typically several hundred kilometres long, including watering points, rest areas and other facilities to support drovers and their animals.

In the early 20th century the Queensland government began to regulate the use of stock routes more closely. A system of fees and permits was introduced and drovers were required to comply with a range of rules and legislation covering the movement of stock. Despite these regulations, the use of stock routes in Queensland remained a critical part of the state's agricultural economy throughout much of the 20th century. However, with the rise of transport costs and the decline of the cattle industry in the late 20th century many stock routes fell into disuse and were gradually closed or repurposed for other use. Today the legacy of Queensland's stock routes lives on in many ways. Many of our old droving trails have been preserved as heritage sites or tourist attractions and there is ongoing debate about the role that stock routes could play in supporting sustainable agriculture and land management practices in the state.

Stock routes in Queensland are an important part of the state's cultural history and serve as a reminder of the pioneering spirit and resilience of the people who built the state's agricultural industry. The stock route network is valuable for its native flora and fauna and remnant vegetation, as well as for Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultural heritage. Stock routes contain major infrastructure for the transport of water, power and communications. The stock routes include 72,000 kilometres of roads, reserves, corridors and pastoral leases and unallocated state land. Together dedicated reserves for travelling stock make up nearly 2.6 million hectares of the Queensland stock route network. I commend the bill to the House.