




Speech By
Jessica Pugh

MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

Record of Proceedings, 16 November 2023

EMBLEMS OF QUEENSLAND AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (12.19 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, it sounds like it was a very fun bill. I rise to make my contribution to the Emblems of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and start by reflecting on some of the observations made by the committee chair, the member for Logan. He told, in great and beautiful and graphic detail, the story of Doug and Pearl—others have also told that story—and it is a fantastic story. It is a piece of Queensland history that stretches back hundreds of millions of years. One of the things that stayed with me from the member for Logan's story was the fact that, while Doug and Pearl chose to take that fossil from their kitchen table and give it to Queensland, that was not the only option that they had. They could have chosen to sell that fossil for quite a significant sum of money, but they did not do that. They chose to keep it here as part of Queensland's history and in so doing they quite literally and figuratively put the town of Muttaborra on the map for tourism reasons and great historical reasons. They kept it for Queensland. I wonder if the fact that they kept it here in Queensland and chose to forgo that is part of the reason that Queenslanders have such a strong attachment to the Mutt, as other members of the parliament have called it and members of the committee have referred to it.

Ms Boyd interjected.

Ms PUGH: It is his name. I feel weird: I feel like he has a formal title, member for Pine Rivers, and I feel like I am being disrespectful. I am not on the committee, so that is just my vibe; I am a formal person.

Government members interjected.

Ms PUGH: I know. I am not a close personal friend of the Mutt, but I respect those friends—

Ms Boyd interjected.

Ms PUGH: No, he is the Mutt to me now, member for Pine Rivers. You started it; I am going to finish it. I want to reflect on the role of emblems more generally. In one of his earlier statements the minister talked about the role they play in engendering civic pride and state pride. The member for Macalister talked about the colour maroon. You cannot get more quintessentially Queensland than the colour maroon. Now with our new fossil emblem, I do not think you can get more quintessentially Queensland than the muttaburrasaurus. It is part of our history, it is our fossil emblem and it is something to be proud of. Member for Mermaid Beach, I certainly hope that when they were ribbing you on the committee they were not suggesting that you should have nominated as the fossil emblem for Queensland! I certainly hope that that is not what that is about.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PUGH: The member for Ninderry has that covered, so I look forward to that contribution. When I was reading about increasing the role of 'paleo tourism', I wondered for a moment if that might be about increasing tourism for people who like to avoid dairy and grain, but I was very relieved to hear that in fact we are talking about dino tourism, which is of much more interest to my 11-year-old, my

two-year-old and my 14-year-old than avoiding dairy and grain, which is also a valid form of tourism as well, I am sure. With the fantastic Queensland eateries that we have around, that is something that we have well covered.

As members would be aware, we have well covered the fantastic story of how almost 60 years ago Doug Langdon was mustering when he found those enormous bones of the plant-eating beast near the Thomson River and we now know it as the *Muttaburrasaurus langdoni*. Obviously it was a big surprise, and on that day I am sure that neither Doug nor Pearl could have imagined that one day that 100-million-year-old fossil would be named after them and become part of Queensland's identity forever.

As we know, there was a vote. Over 9,000 Queenslanders cast their votes between the 12 eligible Queensland fossils. I understand that the runner-up was the *Australotitan cooperensis*. I practised saying that, seriously.

Ms Boyd: Cooper!

Ms PUGH: Thank you, member for Pine Rivers. Don't I just feel embarrassed about not being on first-name terms with all of these different dinosaurs? The town of Muttaborra was able to get its very own dinosaur museum built in 2021 and it has changed the town. It has the interpretation centre, which is contributing heavily to that palaeo tourism that we are now growing in the state of Queensland. As they said, it has put them on the map after many years of trying to become a tourist town and they are very excited about that. I note that the Barcaldine regional mayor at the time commented that the population of Muttaborra was very proud of the work lobbying for that museum and the roads that connect it, because we know that the roads connecting these Outback towns, as we have all been talking about this week, are the lifeblood of those communities. The town built off the back of the sheep industry now has a thriving tourism market, which is really exciting, and I know that with this emblem that is only going to grow.

As a member of the PCCC—indeed, this legislation impacts on all committee members—I want to talk about the clauses of the bill that allow members to participate in committee proceedings via video and electronic means. I am sure that we have all participated in committee proceedings via electronic means. It is worth reflecting, as we have just been speaking about Outback towns, that Queensland is indeed a vast place. It is the most decentralised of all of the states. We have many members in this place who come hundreds, if not thousands, of kilometres to parliament to represent their communities, and we are all very happy to do so. Electronic devices are so handy in helping us stay connected with our communities, and that is why this part of the legislation is so important. If we did not have our handy little phones to keep us connected within our committees and with our communities while in this place, we would not be able to do our jobs and it certainly would place an unfair burden on those more regional members of this parliament if they were required to travel to Brisbane or to another location to do their job while participating in committee business.

Alternatively, if we were not able to stay connected electronically we would have to delay important and pressing issues that committees like mine, the PCCC, often have to deal with. The alternative should not be that we delay pressing issues or that members have to drop everything that is happening in their communities and travel to Brisbane. It is incredibly important that we have provisions such as quorums for previously held committee meetings granted by this legislation and, equally going forward, that we continue to allow regional members of parliament to have the same advantages as more Brisbane-based members in participating in those committee meetings and events.

This might be a bit nerdy of me, but I am very excited by the updates that we have all recently been benefiting from in the Convene system. Some of the new technology that it is bringing online is really exciting and helps to further expedite some of the committee work that we are doing. It seems that I am not the only one who loves all of these changes to Convene, and I am very proud of it. It is wonderful to see continual technology updates. I consider myself to be something of a Luddite, so I always think the sign of great success in any technological system is when even the member for Mount Ommaney can figure out how to use it. The Convene changes do exactly that, so there is a big tick of approval from me on some of those new changes that allow for votes outside of a committee and some of the other wonderful things which mean that, in some cases, we do not even need to convene a meeting; we can literally do that work outside and have it all taken care of without needing to even send an email, by just logging in to Convene. With those few words and brief comments, I will leave my contribution there. I congratulate our good friend Mutt and offer condolences to Cooper for being runner-up. It was a good fight and it was a fair fight, but Mutt rules. I commend the bill to the House.