




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACKAY

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EMBLEMS OF QUEENSLAND AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (5.38 pm): Australia is known as a great ancient land. We have a fascinating fossil history dating back millions of years and the longest living cultural history in the world dating back over 60,000 years through our First Nations people. Our country's state emblems and icons should reflect our history and our values. Queensland's shield on our state's coat of arms symbolises Queensland's primary industries: a sheaf of wheat, the heads of a bull and a ram and mining which is represented by a column of gold rising from a heap of quartz. On the crest, the state badge of the royal crown and Maltese cross is framed by two stalks of sugar cane, which is very special for my area.

The Emblems of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 will officially recognise the *Muttaborrasaurus langdoni* as our state's fossil emblem. Regional mayors, museums and tourism bodies were all invited to nominate a fossil emblem addressing specific criteria. The fossil needed to be recognisable to Queenslanders and connect with our values. The muttaburrasaurus was discovered in Central Queensland and is symbolic of Central Queensland. The dinosaur fossil has also been found in New South Wales but it was found first in Queensland.

Dinosaurs, and in particular the muttaburrasaurus, are not widely identified with any other organisation, so it is fitting to be a Queensland emblem. The naming is the culmination of an extensive consultation process and reflects our government's commitment to supporting a world-class tourism industry that provides vibrant, authentic, accessible and transformative visitor experiences that reflect our natural and cultural values and our communities and regions. The nomination is very fitting as dinosaurs roamed Australia nearly a million years ago. It has a lot to tell us about the land we live on through the research of the fossils.

The fossil should be a creature on its own, not a collection of different types of dinosaurs. The muttaburrasaurus is a unique creature. Roaming in Queensland, first discovered in Queensland and found in various places across our state, it is a great emblem for our state. Great dinosaur walks with footprints have been found and preserved, and this shows how herds of them roamed across Queensland. It is exciting to look at, with its leathery skin and standing about eight metres in length and about 2½ metres in height. It has strong jaws, as we have talked about before, with its shearing teeth so it can chew through vegetation. What I liked was its claw-like thumbs. This fossil has flown under the commercial radar. It seems like it was just sitting there for it to become a Queensland emblem. It is quite unique to Queensland.

The muttaburrasaurus will inspire a whole new wave of young palaeontologists, as well as adults looking to extend their fields of study. There are fantastic opportunities out there in the field with dig sites right in our own backyard. All of those children out there walking around with their plastic dinosaurs tucked under their arms will be able to set their sights on a career as palaeontologists researching dinosaurs.

The Queensland government confirmed that the *Muttaburrasaurus langdoni* was the preferred state fossil for Queensland based on the results of all the public consultation. The muttaburrasaurus dinosaur is an ornithomimid dinosaur from a period approximately 100 million years ago. The dinosaur was named by the Queensland Museum director, Alan Bartholomai, and the Queensland Museum curator, Ralph Molnar. Its name is taken from the town of Muttaburra in Central Queensland and the local grazier, Doug Langdon, who discovered the first fossil specimen while mustering in 1962.

Queensland has much to offer our visitors, and our emblems highlight the beauty and many wonders of our state. Our new fossil emblem will be a unique representation that will showcase Queensland's rich palaeontological diversity and history. When I attended a district Rotary conference in Longreach earlier this year, one of the presentations was from the Australian Age of Dinosaurs museum. The couple of hundred Rotary delegates from across Central Queensland, Northern Queensland, the Northern Territory and Timor Leste were enthralled with the rich history, the exhibits and the professional presentation of the specimen. Every person wanted to know how to book their dinosaur holiday just from that one presentation out at Longreach.

The presenter told of the great story of our dinosaur fossil history in Winton, with the discovery of a giant femur in 1999 on a sheep property, Belmont, near Winton. While David Elliott was mustering, he discovered the bone that was at the time Australia's dinosaur that roamed Winton 95 million years ago. This discovery led to more digs and more discoveries of more fossils. David and his wife, Judy, formed the not-for-profit Australian Age of Dinosaurs incorporated to ensure the preservation and conservation of the dinosaur specimens from Winton. This led to the construction of the world-class Australian Age of Dinosaurs museum of natural history. It houses the world's largest collection of dinosaur fossils.

Excitingly for Queensland, this is just one of our 10 dinosaur sites, with others including Outback at Isa, Riversleigh Fossil Discovery Centre in Mount Isa, the Eromanga Natural History Museum, the Flinders Discovery Centre in Hughenden, the Kronosaurus Korner at Richmond, the Marine Reptile Fossil Display in Boulia and the Outer Barcoo Interpretation Centre in Longreach. There is something special about dinosaurs. The mystery of these prehistoric animals fascinates young and old. Just imagine the education value for everyone when they visit our dinosaur sites. I commend the bill to the House.