




Speech By
Melissa McMahon

MEMBER FOR MACALISTER

Record of Proceedings, 16 November 2023

EMBLEMS OF QUEENSLAND AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (11.54 am): I am very pleased to not be on the naughty list. I rise to make my contribution to the Emblems of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Before I get to the headline act of this bill, the *Muttaburrasaurus langdoni*, or Mutt for short, I will quickly go over some of the other aspects of the bill which we considered as part of the inquiry process.

There are a number of minor and technical changes to the Crime and Corruption Commission Act and the Parliament of Queensland Act with respect to the holding of parliamentary committee meetings. Certainly, as long as I have been participating in committees, whether portfolio or the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee, members have been able to participate in meetings via telephone or videoconference. During the COVID period, it was the primary means of participating in meetings. Whilst the validity of members participating via this means has not been challenged, in a review it was found that the legislation did not expressly permit this type of participation. This amendment will provide the clarification and retrospectivity dating back to 23 April 1998. Other amendments will include providing clarification to definitions of the parliamentary precinct and the Speaker's role in preparing documentation for by-laws and rules made by the Speaker under the Parliament of Queensland Act.

Now onto yours and my favourite dinosaur, the muttaburrasaurus. I would like to acknowledge the town of Muttaburra advised that they would be eagerly tuning in to the broadcast during the debate, so hello to everyone in Muttaburra crammed around and live streaming this particular debate. It is time to channel my inner eight-year-old and speak with a level of enthusiasm about dinosaurs that only a primary schooler or palaeontologist can match. I will resist the temptation to use dinosaur puns or refer to the age of other committee members.

Firstly, just a bit about how Mutt came to be chosen as the Queensland state fossil emblem. The idea originated from Winton's Australian Age of Dinosaurs museum where they noted that, unlike other states, Queensland did not have a fossil emblem. It was certainly the home and source of a large percentage of fossils found in Australia, but we did not have one of our own. A petition was submitted, calling for the establishment of a state fossil, and Winton's own *Diamantinasaurus matildae* was suggested. In 2021, nominations were open for individuals and organisations to suggest candidates for the Queensland fossil emblem and 12 finalists were short-listed.

The public voting period ran from April 2022 to July 2022 with almost 9,000 votes recorded. The clear winner was the *Muttaburrasaurus langdoni* with almost 2,500 of the 9,000 votes, at just over 27 per cent. *Australotitan cooperensis* was second and *Diamantinasaurus matildae* was third with 13 and 11 per cent respectively. Mutt is the people's dinosaur.

The committee travelled to the Australian Age of Dinosaurs museum in Winton and spoke to many stakeholders out that way. Despite the fact that the Age of Dinosaurs team originally nominated the *diamantinasaurus*, they were very welcoming of Mutt being crowned the winner. They stated—

... Muttaborrasaurus is probably the most famous dinosaur in Australia. It has been around since 1963. It is very well known and had a lot of publicity when it was first discovered and we as an organisation are very supportive of the fact that it is unique to Queensland. It represents our state on behalf of Australia probably better than any other dinosaur ...

I remember as a child we certainly learned about the big dinosaurs—the *Tyrannosaurus rex*, the stegosaurus, the triceratops and even, in the age of *Jurassic Park*, we learned about velociraptors and other cool dinosaurs, but none of those are Australian.

I certainly remember muttaburrasaurus as the first dinosaur fossil that I ever saw. In 1986 the Queensland Museum opened at its present site on the other side of the river, and the skeleton representation of muttaburrasaurus and part of the Dinosaur Stampede were the primary focus when you walked in. I remember as a grade 6 student in primary school on my first ever excursion into the city that that was probably the biggest thing that I had ever seen. It became a challenge for us primary schoolers to pronounce the name muttaburrasaurus. Certainly when I heard the Premier nominate muttaburrasaurus, I was able to proudly go to my kids and offer them the challenge as well.

The residents of the Queensland town of Muttaborra were obviously supportive and fiercely proud of their Mutt. Other speakers have outlined the story of the finding of the fossil and the impact it has had on the town since then. I can highly recommend that all members and Queenslanders attend the Muttaborrasaurus Interpretation Centre if they happen to find themselves in the centre of Queensland.

It is time to drop some muttaburrasaurus facts for all the kids. Mutt lived in the Cretaceous period, approximately 100 million years ago, and was about seven to eight metres in length. It was an ornithomimid dinosaur and had a powerful bite with specialised sheering teeth for eating ferns and conifers. I understand that it may be hard to reconcile the importance of naming a state fossil emblem in these current times; however, there is nothing like a bit of state-based competition and rivalry to get Queenslanders' blood pumping. I remind members that one of the other legislated state emblems is the colour maroon. It is enshrined in legislation and, let's face it, maroon is a colour the entire state can get behind. Along with the colour maroon, we have the koala, the Cooktown orchid, the Barrier Reef anemone fish, the brolga and the sapphire. Now we get to add Mutt to the list.

In recognising muttaburrasaurus as an emblem Queensland joins other states in naming a state fossil, leaving only Tasmania without a state fossil. Let's see how Mutt stacks up against the other states. The ACT has the batocara, a trilobite generally considered to be one to two centimetres in length. South Australia has the *Spriggina floundersi*, a worm-like creature approximately three to five centimetres long. Western Australia has the gogonasmus and New South Wales the *Mandageria fairfaxi*—both lobe-finned fish coming in at 40 centimetres long and 1.6 metres long respectively. Victoria has a koolasuchus—great name—an aquatic amphibian approximately three metres long. In comparison, Queensland's muttaburrasaurus stands taller than all the rest and is a worthy representative of Queensland, a place where we do everything bigger and better. With that in mind—Speaker, members, and the people of Muttaborra tuning in—I commend *Muttaborrasaurus langdoni* to the House and I commend this bill to the House.