




Speech By
Nikki Boyd

MEMBER FOR PINE RIVERS

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LAND AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (5.07 pm): In terms of doing more governing from opposition, a good place to start may well be with the introduction of some private members' bills, some thoughts, some ideas and some hard work from those opposite. If these issues are so important to them and if the time lines around the issues are so important to them, why aren't they bringing those ideas to this House? Why aren't they doing the heavy lifting in terms of forming up their own private member's bill? I think we all know the answer to that. It is because they are a lazy opposition. They are big on whingeing and holding media conferences, but they do not actually do the heavy lifting when it comes to proposing policies to this House in the form of private members' bills.

The Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill proposes a number of really important reforms to numerous acts in Queensland, but I will keep my comments to the proposed amendments that pertain to the Stock Route Management Act 2002. I commence my contribution by acknowledging that the stock route network of Queensland is something that I have taken a keen interest in through my role as Assistant Minister for Local Government. Travelling particularly through Western Queensland, I have had many conversations about the stock routes with the councillors and mayors, community advocates and stakeholders and often it is an agenda item at ROC meetings in the regions. In this bill we see much of that work come to fruition.

Queensland's stock routes include 72,000 kilometres of roads, reserves, corridors on pastoral leases and unallocated state land. Together with dedicated reserves for travelling stock, the network spans 2.6 million hectares. Part of our state's rural history for more than 150 years, stock routes evolved as settlers drove stock along corridors that followed our river systems, Indigenous trade routes and trails.

Between 1860 and 1890, established stock routes were recognised and dedicated as roads. Between the 1950s and 1960s, when road improvements were made and road transport became more convenient and efficient, we saw the use of our stock routes decline. Recently, increases in fuel prices and prolonged drought have made the stock route network a cost-effective alternative for moving stock and a vital source for pasture and emergency grazing.

The stock route network is also valued for its native flora and fauna and remnant vegetation as well as for its Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultural heritage. Stock routes contain major infrastructure for transport of water, power and communication. The stock route network contains significant cultural heritage and has been celebrated in the works of Henry Lawson and Banjo Paterson. The Combo waterhole at Winton is thought to be the location of the story that inspired *Waltzing Matilda*.

The changes to this act are a result of extensive stakeholder consultation over many years. The creation of a better funded network will provide improved outcomes for drovers, graziers and others who rely on the network. Local governments will retain the revenue from the use of stock routes so they can be used to manage and maintain the network into the future. This is a change to the current arrangement of 50 per cent local government and 50 per cent state. The introduction of a new fee to

assist with travel and agistment permit costs incurred by local government is also facilitated through these changes. A fee regime that is fair and consistent across the state will also be implemented through these changes. We know that local governments, as managers of the network, have the knowledge and the expertise to advise of changes to stock routes when they are required. Currently, the Department of Resources works with the relevant local government on significant amendments so that local changes can be raised and considered. That will continue into the future.

The matter of a fee regime and how it operates has been a long discussed topic. Within this bill many amendments address it, and we do that through the proposed amendments to permit arrangements including allowing for a local government to waive payment in cases of financial hardship—for example drought, flood and the like. The renewal application fee process has been prescribed by regulation. A local government receiving revenue from stock route application fees, permit fees, water facility agreements and fines must use the amount for the administration, maintenance or improvement of the stock route network in its local government area.

The committee heard that local governments do and can make application to seek funding from the state for capital works and for the maintenance of infrastructure on the stock route network. Predominantly, that funding is used for water infrastructure, dams, bores, windmills, troughs and pads associated with those watering points and to make sure that essential infrastructure is provided.

It is clear that the changes proposed through this bill are important advancements to generational practice. They have been under consideration for some time; in fact, they have been the consideration of many stakeholders over many years. This legislation aims to strike the right balance. I commend the work of the department, stakeholders and the committee in reviewing this legislation before the House. Of course, the future will bring an ever-evolving framework our way, and I am confident that the department will continue to handle these matters in the same measured and considered way. I commend the bill to the House.