




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

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EMBLEMS OF QUEENSLAND AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (6.54 pm): In January of this year I saw the announcement by the Premier, which was as a result of David Elliott putting the idea to the government, that she had decided we would have a dinosaur emblem for Queensland. That would obviously promote our palaeo tourism and recognise the fantastic interest that is out there, particularly with our young people, in the dinosaurs of an age gone by. I texted the Premier pretty quickly and advised her that the *Kronosaurus queenslandicus*, which is a big sea-dwelling dinosaur, was found in Richmond, North-West Queensland, which happened to be my home town. It was actually found on our family property in 1926. I was not there at the time. We did not actually own the property at the time; we owned the property next door. My father tells me he saw the camps and the excavation and that type of thing. It ended up in Harvard University because they paid for the expedition to come out to Australia. There was not much money around then for Australian people to put dinosaur skeletons together, which is quite an expensive, painstaking process.

Since I was a young boy I have had an enormous interest in the dinosaurs of another era. Every time I went mustering, chasing sheep on a Suzuki 250 around that particular paddock where the *Kronosaurus* was found, I would go up and down gullies looking for more dinosaurs. We had plenty of ammonites and plenty of cephalopods—they were a dime a dozen—but no big score. My interest in dinosaurs and an age gone by was absolutely cemented from a young age and it passed on to my kids, who loved the dinosaurs, particularly the T-rex. Unfortunately, I am assured we will never find a T-rex in Australia. Now the grandkids—their kids—are absolutely fascinated with dinosaurs and I am great with the *Tyrannosaurus rex* puppet.

When the Premier advised that we were going to make an emblem for Queensland, I knew the great advantage that would have for our Outback towns. Richmond was a little whistlestop town that everyone drove through until the *Kronosaurus Korner* was built. Robbie Ievers, a guy I grew up with on Marathon Station, found another dinosaur out there that is yet to be named. Someone suggested it should be named the 'Rayasaurus'. Robbie turned the old Richmond picture show into a museum with the support of the Borbidge government—about \$2 million, as I recall—which turned it into a major tourism stop for Richmond. You can see the big crocodile, the *Kronosaurus queenslandicus*, on that corner in Richmond near the caravan park and the lake. It has really made the tourism industry a major support for the town.

I am totally committed to—and I am pleased to hear the chair speak about it—exploring further palaeo tourism opportunities early next year with the committee. The fact of the matter is that there are many opportunities for those Outback towns to enjoy extra money coming in from a tourism industry that at the moment basically consists of the grey nomads and the young people who are fascinated with the dinosaur era and the muttaburrasaurus.

I will be making a dissected speech tonight, delivering the second part in the adjournment debate, when I will talk more about how this has really improved things in terms of tourism and also the wonderful effort of David Elliott. I have to say: in Winton, which is part of the promotional dinosaur triangle that takes in Hughenden, Richmond and Winton, there is a magnificent facility paid for by AB Paterson College on the Gold Coast—about \$4 million worth—for the Outward Bound camps. They truck their students from the Gold Coast to Winton so they can get a feel for what the dinosaur world was all about. It is a fascinating world. It is a great opportunity because Queensland is an important area in the world for palaeo tourism. As the chairman said, we are going to explore it further early next year. I will have more to say about the muttaburrasaurus in part 2 of my contribution.