




Speech By  
**Robert Skelton**

**MEMBER FOR NICKLIN**

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## **EMBLEMS OF QUEENSLAND AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr SKELTON** (Nicklin—ALP) (4.48 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Emblems of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. On 22 October 2022 the Queensland government announced the *Muttaborrasaurus langdoni* as the state fossil emblem. Amending the Emblems of Queensland Act 2005 is required to officially recognise it as the state fossil emblem. In addition to legislating for the state fossil emblem, the Emblems of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 also includes certain amendments to the Crime and Corruption Act 2001, the Parliamentary Service Act 1988 and the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 to address a number of minor and technical issues to improve and clarify parliamentary processes and procedures. These include amendments to the Crime and Corruption Act 2001 to clarify that members of the CCC and its predecessors have been able to attend committee meetings either in person or via video link or other electronic means; and amendments to the Parliamentary Service Act 1988 to clarify that the 'parliamentary precinct' includes the chamber of the Legislative Assembly and its galleries while parliament is sitting. Further amendments to the Parliamentary Service Act 1988 provide that, in a proceeding for an offence related to a person's behaviour on the parliamentary precinct, evidence may be given of any of the directions given by the Speaker or other authorised person in a court or other forum outside the parliamentary precinct. This means that disruptive behaviour taking place inside the parliamentary precinct can be adequately prosecuted without parliamentary privilege intervening.

Also included are amendments to the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 to refine the process by which a member of the Legislative Assembly, while ill, can notify the Assembly of their request for a proxy vote; to retrospectively clarify that since 23 April 1998 members of parliamentary committees have been able to participate in committee meetings in person or by telephone, video or other electronic means; and to update a number of cross-references in the act to definitions that are explained and provided for in the Electoral Act 1992.

The bill amends the Emblems of Queensland Act 2005 to prescribe *Muttaborrasaurus langdoni* as the state's fossil emblem and provide a common name, the Muttaborra dinosaur, or, as mentioned by the member for Hervey Bay, Mutt.

In relation to the Crime and Corruption Act 2001, since 1998 participants in Legislative Assembly committees can attend said committee meetings via remote means, including phone or video. There is an inconsistency between this and the fact that Crime and Corruption Committee meetings require members to be physically present. In 2020 the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 was amended to include the definitions of 'present' and 'voting' in order to clarify that members could participate through electronic means. To ensure consistency, this bill amends the Crime and Corruption Act 2001 to include those same definitions. Because the relevant standing orders have been relied upon since 23 April 1998 to enable members of the PCCC and its predecessor committees to meet by remote means, the bill makes these amendments retrospective to that date in order to ensure that the meetings of the PCCC and its predecessor committees were not inquorate when decisions their members took at meetings were made.

The bill also provides that, for the purposes of the Parliamentary Service Act 1988, the Legislative Assembly and its galleries are considered to be part of the parliamentary precinct while the Legislative Assembly is sitting. In October 1988, the parliament passed the Parliamentary Service Act, which established the Parliamentary Service Commission, rather than the Speaker, to determine policy and overall management and control at Parliament House. In 1995, the parliament passed legislation to abolish the Parliamentary Service Commission and vest its powers in the Speaker. However, the definition of 'parliamentary precinct' was inadvertently not amended at the time to remove the exclusion reference to the Legislative Assembly and its galleries when the Assembly is sitting. This has meant that on parliamentary sitting days since 1995, the Legislative Assembly chamber and its galleries have technically not been part of the parliamentary precinct for the purposes of the Parliamentary Service Act 1988. This has not affected the ability of the Speaker to control the behaviour of members of the Legislative Assembly when the Assembly is sitting but does mean that the by-laws made by the Speaker to control the behaviour of other persons entering upon the parliamentary precinct on a sitting day do not apply if such persons are in the Legislative Assembly chamber and its galleries. The amendment in the bill will clarify the definition of 'parliamentary precinct' to ensure by-laws made by the Speaker will apply to persons in the Legislative Assembly chamber and its galleries when the Assembly is sitting.

The bill also provides an amendment allowing evidence to be given in a court or place out of the Legislative Assembly of a direction made or purportedly made by the Speaker or a person authorised to make such directions during proceedings in the Assembly. The amendment is necessary to ensure that evidence can be given in a prosecution against individuals who obstruct or otherwise disrupt proceedings in this House, for example, under section 50 of the Parliamentary Service Act 1988.

The bill amends part 5 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 to provide that the Speaker will merely be required to notify the Assembly they have received a proxy voting request from a member rather than have to read it to the Assembly. This means that for members of the Assembly who are ill and requesting a proxy vote, the details of their illness do not have to be divulged to the Assembly. The bill also makes retrospective amendments to the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 regarding committee meetings held via remote means, for example by telephone, video or other electronic means. While amendments were made to the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 in April 2020 to ensure all future parliamentary committee meetings could be held with members either present in person or participating by remote means, they were not made retrospective at that time. It also updates a number of cross-references in the act to definitions that are explained and provided for in the Electoral Act 1992.

That is the very nitty-gritty detail of this particular bill. The committee were very lucky to have this bill before them and to have explored Western Queensland and the dinosaur trail and learn many things about the ancient history of Queensland. It would have been quite fabulous indeed. Someone made the point that emblems are important. That is indeed true. We are talking about a creature that lived many millions of years ago. What stands out to me most about this particular fossil emblem being chosen is the story around it: its discovery by Doug Langdon and his fierce protection and advocacy. He was adamant that it had to belong to the people of Queensland. The Queensland Museum assisted in keeping these remains in Queensland. They rebuilt this dinosaur for all of us to see and put a tiny Western Queensland town on the map. It has made that part of Queensland a place where you can drive around and see different types of dinosaurs that roamed this continent many millions of years ago.

I would not go as far as the member for Stafford and mention legislation to my children, including legislation about dinosaurs—it sounds a little bit long-winded—but all of our children enjoy going to the Queensland Museum, and the dinosaurs are the first thing they see. Up until you are about 10, everything is about dinosaurs.

**Mr Smith:** Thirty-three!

**Mr SKELTON:** In some instances it lasts longer, in particular for the palaeontologists among us. It is great for Queensland—it is great in particular for regional Queensland—to develop an industry that is sustainable. It will keep young people in those regional towns employed in jobs. It will keep that lifeline there. That is what we need to do in this state. We are a decentralised state, but we own it and we are proud of it.