




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BONNEY

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EMBLEMS OF QUEENSLAND AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (11.53 am): I rise to make a short contribution to the debate on the Emblems of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, particularly as I serve as the shadow science minister. I would be disappointing my younger self if I did not take the opportunity to contribute to probably the only debate in this place that will predominantly relate to dinosaurs. I am of course among countless Queenslanders who were in absolute awe when they visited the Queensland Museum as a kid, back in the nineties when the first *Jurassic Park* film came out.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr O'CONNOR: From my own side! That is just terrible, isn't it?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order, members!

Mr O'CONNOR: Thank you for your protection from my own members, Mr Deputy Speaker. These prehistoric creatures are a gateway to a fascination with science for so many young people and we need to be doing all we can to encourage even more young Queenslanders to study science and to pursue a career in STEM, so it is fitting and important that we have such an iconic ornithopod as our state's fossil emblem. The *Muttaborrasaurus*—meaning the lizard from Muttaborra—*langdoni*, which is in honour of Doug Langdon, roamed our state 112 million to 103 million years ago in the forests which lined the inland Eromanga Sea. It was likely seven or eight metres long and 2½ metres high and would have weighed nearly three tonnes. It had a beak-like snout to cut through tough plant-like material such as ferns and cycads and grinding teeth further back into its mouth. It also probably had fleshy cheeks and is theorised to have communicated by making a special call through its nose-like hollow chamber.

Like other members, I want to pay tribute to grazier Doug Langdon, who made this incredible discovery exactly 60 years ago while mustering. In his words, it 'put Muttaborra on the map', and I acknowledge his widow, Pearl, who shared with the committee the beautiful story about how her late husband made this amazing discovery and put himself and his town in the history books. It has undoubtedly done that, with prehistoric or palaeo or dinosaur tourism being another important way of getting people to visit our outback, leading to important economic benefits. From the submissions to this bill we can see that the Eromanga Natural History Museum hosted 15,000 visitors in the last year alone, and other government data shows that over 122,000 visitors to the outback, or around one in four, go to the region because of these attractions.

The Queensland Museum team, led by Dr Bartholomai, made the first Australian dinosaur skull discovery at the site found by Doug. This was the start of a 17-year process to catalogue and clean the fossil fragments. For two decades it was the largest complete dinosaur ever found in our nation. The Lake Eyre Basin is one of the most magnificent natural environments in our state and the *Muttaborrasaurus*'s bones were discovered in rocks which would have been at the bottom of this inland sea, with the body believed to have been washed out to that sea before sinking into the mud and being preserved for tens of millions of years for Doug to find.

The muttaburrasaurus was the clear winner in the vote to choose this fossil emblem. It is quite a feat to win a campaign over 100 million years after you have become extinct, but the muttaburrasaurus received 2,409 votes, beating out our nation's largest discovered dinosaur, the australotitan, which received the much smaller number of 1,179 votes. The muttaburrasaurus had the important support of the Maranoa regional, the Winton shire, the Barcaldine shire and the Flinders shire councils as well as David Elliott from Winton's Australian Age of Dinosaurs museum who said it is 'unique to Queensland', it 'represents our state on behalf of Australia' and that it is 'the right choice'. This will be the first dinosaur to be a fossil emblem of any jurisdiction in the nation. I hope this leads to even more interest in homegrown science and I have no doubt it will further increase tourism to this part of our state. I encourage all Queenslanders to consider making a trip out to this region. I further encourage all Queenslanders to make this tired, chaotic Labor government extinct next October.