




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR HILL

Record of Proceedings, 11 May 2023

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Crocodile Management

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (3.12 pm): For years the KAP has warned the state government about the threat that crocodiles pose to human life and to the tourist industry in North Queensland. We have already tabled two bills in parliament and we will be tabling our Crocodile Control and Conservation Bill 2023 in the coming months—that is, three bills.

Crocodile numbers are exploding as more and more crocodiles move into populated waterways and beaches. We know that North Queenslanders cannot trust governing from Brisbane on the issues that need to be fixed locally. Our bill aims to locally manage the crocodile population in Queensland while continuing to preserve and protect crocodiles in the wild.

The bill will establish the Queensland Crocodile Authority, which will be based in Cairns and not Brisbane where there are no crocs at all. The authority will make all decisions and deliver all programs on crocodile management issues, with the advisory committee established to represent Indigenous communities, tourism businesses, Surf Life Saving Queensland and all other relevant stakeholders. It is important that the program is flexible to cater for cultural sensitivities in some Indigenous communities that see the crocodile as a totem. The Queensland Crocodile Authority will also oversee funding, licensing and the development of crocodile and egg harvesting, farming and other related economic activities and opportunities for Indigenous communities.

Another key part of the bill is a zero tolerance policy on crocodiles in populated waterways and beaches. For instance, every year the Northern Territory culls between 250 and 300 crocodiles in the Darwin Harbour. That has not adversely affected populations in other parts of the Northern Territory. In North Queensland we should also establish concentrated annual culling programs to target populated areas where we do not want crocodiles.

The government has to decide what value they place on human lives in North Queensland and it has to manage the dangerous consequences of humans and crocodiles living alongside each other. It is acknowledged that we are never going to completely eliminate the threat but we can reduce the risks through culling programs to limit the number of crocodile attacks in populated areas. North Queenslanders want strong management that mitigates risk and gives us back our popular waterways and beaches. The fact that you can cull cats, dogs, horses, pigs and kangaroos but not man-eating crocodiles is complete madness. I feel sorry for the tourism industry, which is trying to promote pristine beaches, islands and waterways only for tourists to be greeted by croc signs upon arrival. It is time we put human lives, the tourist industry in North Queensland and our quality of life first.

(Time expired)