




Speech By  
**Jim McDonald**

**MEMBER FOR LOCKYER**

---

Record of Proceedings, 18 April 2024

## **AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (4.35 pm): It is a privilege to rise and speak on the Agriculture and Fisheries and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. There is much to deal with in relation to this bill, in particular around regulated dogs, but there are also some very important aspects around the Biosecurity Act 2014. In 2018 there was a review of the Biosecurity Act and 22 recommendations came from that review.

While talking about agriculture, this is the first opportunity I have had in this House to place on the record our deepest sympathies to one of the farming families in the Lockyer Valley, the Stock family, following the recent passing of Dolores. She was a fit 79-year-old and it is a tragedy that she has gone. She will certainly be sadly missed. Dolores was an extremely conservative, hardworking woman in Laidley and the matriarch of her family. She was so supportive of the community and was always willing to help others. She was part of the hospital auxiliary and the schools. I wish to express our thoughts and condolences on the loss of someone who worked to improve outcomes for all. Those words were penned by Ian Rickuss, the former member for Lockyer. I place on record the condolences of the Rickuss family, that is, both Ian and Ann, as well as Deb, myself and our team. Rest in peace, Dolores. Dolores is survived by Alan, Luke, Amanda and their families. It is the hardworking farming families such as the Stocks who make a difference to our community in the Lockyer. They employ others and provide wonderful fresh produce for our community—in their case, wonderful high-value jersey milk for the community. It is great milk.

I turn to the important aspects of this bill, in particular around the control of animals. I thank the minister for the amendment. I look forward to understanding further details of the amendment regarding the separation of regulated dogs in public places and also private places. We were certainly concerned about this. With regulated or dangerous dogs, if a dog in a public place attacks somebody and is out of control then we have no problem with that dog immediately being dealt in the most severe circumstances under the law. However, I do think that there are cases where a dangerous or regulated dog can be at a family home for security purposes and, if somebody comes to that home, there may be mitigating circumstances that mean that dog should be given a chance. I am not at all condoning the attack or the regulation of that dog, which is very important. However, I know that there are cases where very minor attacks have occurred and the dogs have been destroyed. I think there needs to be some consideration around that. I thank the minister for that amendment and look forward to further details being provided.

I will not go through all the specific breeds of dogs, but thanks to the chair for outlining those in his finest linguistic fashion. These breeds are banned from import into Australia. Any dog resembling those brought into Australia has to be desexed. There are specific regulations around that at a federal level—and, in fact, there is very little evidence at all of purebred dogs coming into Queensland.

I place on record our concerns on behalf of many local governments and the RSPCA in terms of having the ability to work with this legislation. In 2011 Victoria went down the path of breed-specific banning and discovered that, over the preceding years, 74 per cent of appeals to the court not to destroy those dogs were overturned because it was not about the behaviour of the dog, it was about the breed of the dog. The difficulty in identifying breed-specific issues were very challenging. Vets had to identify dogs by description. Even DNA testing was inconclusive because of the crossbred nature of some of these dogs. It is very hard to get a purebred DNA marker for these animals. From the Victorian experience, 74 per cent of appeals concerning those breeds were overturned. The Victorian model changed.

I recommend strongly that the Queensland government consider a similar measure because it will be operationally challenging to impose breed-specific banning notices and destruction notices for these dogs. It will be very difficult to do. In fact, as the RSPCA said, it will mean that it is not about the behaviour of those dogs; it is about the breed. There are many dogs which we need to focus on and which officers need to focus on. It is important that we focus on dogs behaving badly and not waste time on court hearings for the others. I have covered enough about the breeds of dog.

I now move to fisheries controls. I draw the attention of the House to the evidence of the Queensland seafood industry and the Queensland Seafood Industry Association regarding the independent onboard monitoring and controls being put in place. As our shadow minister rightly pointed out, in terms of the operationalisation of some of these controls and reporting interactions with different endangered species, most of these interactions are innocuous. They are sighting, bumps or what have you with crocodiles or birds that might land on the deck of a ship. There are very few interactions with endangered animals such as dugongs, swordfish and so on. As we heard from those in the seafood industry, fishers are using best practice to be able to minimise any interaction. They do not want to be untangling swordfish from their nets. They are fishing in ways to strongly avoid that.

The point that industry representatives very much stressed to the committee through the evidence and the hearings was the lack of meaningful consultation that took into account their privacy and their suggestions in terms of being able to continue fishing with some confidence whilst not being subject to a Big Brother style solution. Most of these boats have CCTV solutions and fishers are happy to be able to assist in the management of the fishery because they want to ensure it is sustainable for generations to come. They were willing to work with government, but, as the shadow minister rightly pointed out, there were only a small number of meetings over a period of time. I understand that there have been changes in the department and a lack of passing on of corporate knowledge in that respect. Those are some of the challenges with respect to the bill that the committee heard about and that I wanted to share with the House.

There are a number of good changes in this bill that are welcome, but I am concerned, as was pointed out earlier by our shadow minister, the member for Gympie, that some of these recommendations have been on the table for quite some time. If they were to assist local government in managing the dogs and to assist fishermen in better managing their fisheries then they should have been introduced a lot sooner. I am happy to support the bill.