

~~organisation providing specialist services to those living with acquired brain injury or behaviours that challenge our understanding.~~

~~The low point for me in the journey to have Synapse up and running in Cairns came at a public meeting in 2012. I attended that meeting as a local councillor. That meeting held at the Gordonvale RSL followed a decision by Synapse to purchase land in Hall Road in Gordonvale. Following a local misinformation campaign, people assembled to oppose the facility as they were concerned they did not want 'people like that' living in their street. As a result of this and other issues with the local council the project did not proceed in that location, leading to further delays.~~

~~The issue became personal for me around that time when a young man by the name of Jarrod Harrow was hit by traffic while crossing the Bruce Highway at Mount Sheridan. Jarrod was a local student at Woree State High School. I had been working with his mother, Melicha, on a community project that celebrated the contribution of South Sea Islanders who were blackbirded to Queensland all these years ago.~~

~~Jarrod was crossing the road and was hit and had both his legs broken. While waiting for treatment, bone marrow or fat from one of the bones in his legs got into his blood stream, punctured his heart and went to his brain causing him to get an acquired brain injury. I often ponder if he had stopped a second longer or had reached the side of the road a second later the accident would not have occurred. We should always remember the saying 'there but for the grace of God go I' when these things happened, as fate plays its cards at these times regardless of our plans.~~


~~For people unfortunate to suffer an ABI, Cairns Hospital has had little to offer by way of rehabilitation services, with ABI patients needing to use facilities in the geriatric ward. Those like Jarrod who have had strong advocates in his case his mother, Melicha were able to be transferred to Brisbane where they have been able to access services through Synapse. But the goal has always been to get a Synapse operating facility in Cairns.~~

~~Following the failed proposal in Gordonvale, Synapse moved their focus to Hoare Street in Manunda, in my electorate, where they acquired a block of land from the local health board. Last week was a real highlight when the application for the centre was passed and approved by council. Now the end goal is within sight. I am confident there will be a rehabilitation centre operating in Cairns during this term of government. Primarily aimed at Indigenous people with an ABI, this facility will provide a pathway and life opportunities for some of our most disadvantaged Queenslanders. I look forward to this long awaited dream becoming a reality.~~

~~(Time expired)~~

AGRICULTURE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing) (12.34 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Queensland) Act 1994, the Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act 1966, the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001, the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008, the Biosecurity Act 2014, the Brands Act 1915, the Chemical Usage (Agricultural and Veterinary) Control Act 1988, the Exotic Diseases in Animals Act 1981, the Forestry Act 1959, the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Act (No. 2) 2013 and the Stock Act 1915, for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Agriculture and Environment Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Agriculture and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015.

Tabled paper: Agriculture and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, explanatory notes.

Today I am pleased to introduce the Agriculture and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. The bill will reform a number of acts within my portfolio that have wideranging implications for the food and fibre sector. While these amendments are modest in nature, they will streamline legislative processes and create efficiencies for industry stakeholders. The bill will also make amendments to the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Act (No. 2) 2013 to ensure the continuation of existing provisions for managing forest reserve lands. This act has not yet commenced.

Agricultural industries are integral to Queensland's economy. The food and fibre sector as a whole is the backbone for many rural and regional communities throughout the state. In April 2015 the total value of Queensland's primary industry commodities for 2014-15 was forecast to be \$15.02 billion.

Food and fibre is a significant contributor to the state's economy and a major source of employment across the state. Approximately one in seven Queenslanders is employed within agriculture across the entire supply chain. These figures demonstrate the significant role that agriculture has in Queensland's productivity and profitability. In order to maintain and optimise these outputs, the legislation that supports our food and fibre industries must remain contemporary and accessible.

This bill makes reforms to the legislation governing agricultural and veterinary chemicals, animal welfare and management, biosecurity and forestry. Agricultural and veterinary chemicals are an integral part of production for many primary producers so it is essential that the legislation regulating use of such chemicals is as clear and noncumbersome as possible.

This government has made a commitment to animal welfare standards. The amendments which I introduce today are necessary to create a legislative framework which is accessible and straightforward, and adequately balances the competing interests of each animal and industry stakeholder.

The Queensland government considers biosecurity risks to be a significant threat to our state's health and economy. It is important that Queensland continues to be vigilant and responsive to biosecurity threats and it is essential that we have the legislative measures to support this position.

Agvet chemicals are used in a variety of contexts, including the use of herbicides on weeds and veterinary medicines on animals. A national review of agvet chemical legislation has been ongoing for some years. Certain unrelated amendments to Queensland agvet legislation have been envisaged for some time but had been postponed in the past, pending the outcome of the national review. Given further delays in finalising the national review, it is proposed to progress these other amendments now, given the opportunity to do so within a miscellaneous bill.

The Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Queensland) Act 1994 applies Commonwealth agvet legislation in Queensland. This bill will provide clarity and legislative consistency between the state and Commonwealth legislation by clarifying which Commonwealth agvet legislation instruments are applicable within Queensland.

The principal objective of the Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act 1996 is to control the distribution of agricultural chemicals from aircraft and ground equipment. At a recent Committee for Economic Development of Australia conference, I addressed the growing acceptance of new technologies as a cheaper and more user-friendly supplement to existing traditional production practices. Unmanned aerial vehicles, or UAVs, and other robotics present an unparalleled opportunity to increase overall farm productivity. This state is in an era of massive change, with increased competition and demand for products in both domestic and international markets. Queensland needs this technology to remain viable and competitive in an increasingly globalised food market.

UAVs are becoming increasingly relied upon in the interstate arena for aerial chemical distribution. Consequently, the amendments contained in the bill give Queensland the opportunity to step up and remain viable and efficient in agricultural production by enabling the licensing of new aerial distribution technologies.

This government has made a commitment to ensuring that Queensland's animal welfare practices are consistent with world's best practice. Animals are required to be humanely killed and the Health Act 1937 authorises persons to administer drugs to animals for this purpose. It is generally an offence under the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 to kill animals by feeding or administering harmful substances to them. This prohibition prevents cruel acts of poisoning and other harmful consequences occurring. Amendments contained in the bill will ensure that all persons who are authorised under the Health Act to administer substances to animals are not guilty of an offence for humanely killing animals in this way.

The objective of the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008 in part is to provide for the identification and management of cats and dogs. Up until now, there has been unnecessary confusion in its interpretation due to different meanings of 'permanent identification devices' and 'prescribed permanent identification devices'. Amendments contained in this bill combine these definitions and clarify the requirements surrounding the implementation of microchips. The amendments to this act also remove unnecessary restrictions on suppliers of these identification devices.

The amendments in the bill also maintain the right for producers to destroy dogs attacking or about to attack their stock without fear of civil liability. It is essential that we support our primary producers and help them protect their livelihoods from the threat of such pests.

Flexible biosecurity capacity and capability is fundamental to a healthy and prosperous food and fibre industry. Biosecurity reform in recent years has culminated in the Biosecurity Act 2014, which will commence sometime in the coming year. The Biosecurity Act provides a comprehensive biosecurity framework to manage the risks of animal and plant diseases and pests in a timely and effective way. Given the size of the Biosecurity Act, it was almost inevitable that some desirable amendments would be identified before it commenced. This bill includes a number of such amendments.

Exotic pests and diseases are a significant threat to livestock industries, the economy and human health. They have the potential to devastate entire industries and the livelihoods of the many producers that support these industries. Feeding of restricted animal material, or RAM, to ruminants will exacerbate the spread of these diseases, including mad cow disease. For a number of years, Australia has placed bans on feeding of RAM to such animals.

There are similar restrictions on the feeding of animal material more commonly known as 'swill' to pigs, primarily for the prevention of foot-and-mouth disease. In Queensland, swill cannot be fed to poultry to reduce the likelihood of the spread of Newcastle disease and infectious bursal disease.

The amendments to the Biosecurity Act in this bill serve to clarify which animals can be fed RAM and swill under strict conditions and circumstances and those that cannot. The amendments only go so far as to enforce the national ruminant feed ban without unnecessary and unintended consequences on the feeding of non-risk animals such as captive birds of prey.

Further amendments to the Biosecurity Act include a provision that a person cannot apply for a biosecurity instrument permit in circumstances where a biosecurity certificate is more appropriate. This will ensure that affected persons are not circumventing certification schemes to avoid the payment of a fee.

The bill makes further amendments to the Biosecurity Act that relate to auditor's approvals. The amendments now provide for immediate suspension of an auditor's approval where there is a serious risk to trade in a particular commodity.

Upon commencement, the Biosecurity Act will repeal a number of acts. Despite the upcoming repeal of these acts, it is critical that a small number of problems in them are addressed now to protect Queensland's food and fibre industries.

The Exotic Diseases in Animals Act 1981 will be repealed by the Biosecurity Act. Once the Biosecurity Act commences, the chief executive will have the power to make a biosecurity emergency order to holistically deal with exotic disease incidents. Until the Biosecurity Act commences, however, standstill zones or restricted areas under the Exotic Diseases in Animals Act may be needed to stop the spread of exotic diseases. The bill will allow the chief executive to notify particular areas as standstill zones or restricted areas without having to make notifications as subordinate legislation. This is an effective and logical amendment which streamlines the process until the commencement of the Biosecurity Act.

Biosecurity measures must be flexible and responsive. A rigid and unyielding biosecurity framework will not adequately support our various food and fibre industries. Interim amendments to the Stock Act 1915 are crucial to maintain this flexibility, even though it will be repealed by the Biosecurity Act. The amendments to the Stock Act will provide inspectors with the discretion to impose other measures, rather than issue quarantine notices when stock are diseased or suspected of being diseased. These amendments will support our primary producers, promote business continuity and ensure the reduced disruption to livestock operations in circumstances where disease risks can be adequately managed without the need to impose a quarantine.

The Forestry Act 1959 generally provides for the protection and management of state forests and provides for specific offences for interfering with or destroying forest products. It is important that we do not deter people from carrying out their biosecurity duties for fear of committing an offence. The proposed amendments will protect persons complying with their general biosecurity obligation under the Biosecurity Act from prosecution under Forestry Act in some circumstances. The amendments will exempt persons from specific offences where they interfere with or destroy forest products on forest entitlement areas and forest consent areas in order to meet their obligations under the Biosecurity Act. These amendments balance the protection of Queensland's state forest assets and the management of biosecurity threats.

In the past, civil liability for state employees has been largely governed by the provisions contained within each act. The bill makes amendments to the Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act, the Animal Care and Protection Act, the Biosecurity Act, the Brands Act 1915 and the

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Chemical Usage (Agricultural and Veterinary) Control Act 1988 with regard to indemnity for state employees. These amendments streamline Public Service indemnity provisions and provide certainty for those acting in an official capacity.

Previously, company director liability has been a source of angst for many directors acting within a company. The strict liability provisions meant that corporate officers would often be liable for actions in which they played no part. The amendments being made to the Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act and the Chemical Usage (Agricultural and Veterinary) Control Act significantly reduce this direct liability for officers in circumstances of actions committed by the corporation. This reform is consistent with the Council of Australian Governments' guidelines to reduce the burden of company director liability for corporate officers.

This government will continue to work with producers and stakeholders across the entire supply chain to create a profitable food and fibre sector. Legislative improvement creates opportunities which previously did not exist. These opportunities are what drives growth and opens new channels for development, making Queensland a robust and resourceful place to be involved in the food and fibre sector. The legislative amendments in the bill will help underpin the future success of this productive and prosperous state.

Finally, this bill includes some amendments to legislation within the portfolio of my colleague the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef. Work on finalising the land tenure status for a number of forest reserves is ongoing. The amendments to the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Act (No. 2) 2013 contained in the bill will ensure the continuation of existing provisions for managing the remaining 38 forest reserve lands until such time as a final land tenure for them can be determined and the land subsequently transferred. I have much pleasure in commending this bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. WS BYRNE (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing) (12.53 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Agriculture and Environment Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Furner): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Agriculture and Environment Committee.

Sitting suspended from 12.53 pm to 2.30 pm.