

**Annual Report**  
**2014-15**

**Report No. 10, 55<sup>th</sup> Parliament**

**Agriculture and Environment Committee**

**November 2015**

## **Agriculture and Environment Committee**

**Chair** Ms Jennifer Howard MP, Member for Ipswich

**Deputy Chair** Mr Stephen Bennett MP, Member for Burnett

**Members** Mrs Julieanne Gilbert MP, Member for Mackay

Mr Robbie Katter MP, Member for Mount Isa

Mr Linus Power MP, Member for Logan

Mr Ted Sorensen MP, Member for Hervey Bay

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## **Chair's foreword**

This report covers the activities of the Agriculture and Environment Committee of the 55<sup>th</sup> Parliament for the final months of the 2014-15 financial year following the committee's establishment in late March 2015.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank staff of the three departments within our areas of responsibility: the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection and the Department of National Parks Sport and Racing, as well as submitters and others who contributed to our inquiries.

I would also like to thank the parliamentary staff who assisted the committee with this work.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J Howard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'J'.

Jennifer Howard MP

**Chair**

November 2015



## 1 Agriculture and Environment Committee

The Agriculture and Environment Committee was established on 27 March 2015 as a portfolio committee of the Queensland Legislative Assembly.

Section 92 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* outlines the main responsibilities of a portfolio committee. In relation to its portfolio area, a committee may—

- consider Appropriation Bills
- consider other legislation and proposed legislation
- perform its role in relation to public accounts and public works.

Section 92 (2) of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* also outlines that a committee is to deal with an issue referred to it by the Legislative Assembly or under another Act, whether or not the issue is within its portfolio area.

Schedule 6 of the *Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly* sets out the committee's portfolio responsibilities as follows:

- Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
- Environment and Heritage Protection
- Natural Resources and Mines.

## 2 Annual report

In accordance with section 108 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, the committee is required to table an annual report within four months and 14 days after the end of each financial year. The report must include:

- a list of meetings of the committee and the names of members attending or absent from each meeting
- a summary of issues considered by the committee, including a description of the more significant issues arising from the considerations
- a statement of the committee's revenue and spending for the year
- a brief description of responses by Ministers to recommendations of the committee.

This report provides a summary of the activities of the committee from 27 March to 30 June 2015.

## 3 Inquiries and reports

The committee, in accordance with section 93(1) of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, completed one Bill inquiry [Exhibited Animals Bill 2015] and commenced a second [Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill 2015] during the period covered by this report. During the period the committee also considered 24 pieces of subordinate legislation.

From this work, the committee produced three reports to the Legislative Assembly. These reports are discussed below.

The committee's reports are available from the committee's webpage: [www.parliament.qld.gov.au/aec](http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/aec).

### **3.1 Report No.1 - Subordinate legislation tabled between 27 August 2014 and 14 October 2014**

On 29 April 2015, the committee tabled *Report No. 1: Subordinate legislation tabled between 27 August 2014 and 14 October 2014*. The report advised of the committee's findings with respect to the following subordinate legislation:

- Food Production (Safety) Regulation 2014 (SL No. 197)
- Environmental Legislation Amendment and Repeal Regulation (No.1) 2014 (SL No. 198)
- Food Production (Safety) Amendment Regulation (No.1) 2014 (SL No. 221)
- Proclamation – Environmental Offsets Act 2014 (SL No. 222)
- Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No.2) 2014 (SL No. 223)
- Rural and Regional Adjustment Regulation (No.7) 2014 (SL No. 230)

The committee did not identify any significant policy issues or issues relating to fundamental legislative principles in the subordinate legislation examined, with the exception of Environmental Legislation Amendment and Repeal Regulation (No.1) 2014 (SL No. 198) in relation to offences for the handling of certain waste material.

The committee recommended that the Legislative Assembly note its findings in relation to SL 198.

### **3.2 Report No. 2 - Exhibited Animals Bill 2015**

The Exhibited Animals Bill 2015 was referred to the committee on 27 March 2015 for examination and report. The committee was required to table its report by 8 May 2015. The Bill provided for the introduction of a new regulatory framework for the exhibited animals industry in Queensland whilst ensuring that associated animal welfare, biosecurity and safety risks are managed.

The committee made seven recommendations from its examination of the Bill, and sought clarification of three further matters from the responsible minister, Hon Bill Byrne MP, Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing. Minister Byrne, in his [response to the committee's report tabled 21 May 2015](#) accepted all seven recommendations, and provided clarification of the three matters raised by the committee.

The Bill was passed with amendments by the Legislative Assembly on 3 June 2015.

### **3.3 Report No.3 - Subordinate legislation tabled between 28 October 2014 and 26 March 2015**

On 27 May 2015, the committee tabled *Report No. 3: Subordinate legislation tabled between 28 October 2014 and 26 March 2015*. The report advised of the committee's findings with respect to the following subordinate legislation:

- Recreation Areas Management Amendment Regulation (No.1) 2014 (SL No.240)
- Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment (Postponement) Regulation 2014 (SL No. 252)
- Nature Conservation Legislation Amendment Regulation (No.3) 2014 (SL No. 263)
- Forestry (State Forests) Amendment Regulation (No.2) 2014 (SL No. 264)
- Fisheries (East Coast Trawl) Amendment Management Plan (No.1) 2014 (SL No. 267)
- Nature Conservation (Protected Areas) Amendment Regulation (No.3) 2014 (SL No. 268)
- Land Amendment Regulation (No.1) 2014 (SL No. 271)
- Plant Protection (Cucumber Green Mottle Mosaic-Pest Declaration) Notice 2014 (SL No. 272)



- Plant Protection (Cucumber Green Mottle Mosaic) Quarantine Notice 2014 (SL No. 273)
- Stock Amendment Regulation (No.2) 2014 (SL No. 281)
- Fisheries Amendment Regulation (No.1) 2014 (SL No. 282)
- Proclamation - Forestry and Another Act Amendment Act 2014 (SL No. 291)
- Recreation Areas Management and Another Regulation Amendment Regulation (No.1) 2014 (SL No. 292)
- Proclamation - Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2014 (SL No. 302)
- Rural and Regional Adjustment Amendment Regulation (No. 8) 2014 (SL No. 327)
- Fisheries Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2014 (SL No. 328)
- Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Amendment Regulation (No.1) 2015 (SL No. 4)
- Plant Protection Amendment Regulation (No.1) 2015 (SL No. 5)

In its report, the committee highlighted concerns in relation to SL Nos. 240, 263 and 264.

In relation to subordinate legislation No. 240 Recreation Areas Management Amendment Regulation (No.1) 2014, the committee recommended (Recommendation 1) that the Minister advise the House of the measures in place to ensure that only genuine residents, whose primary place of residence is Rainbow Beach, have been granted fee exemptions. The committee also recommended (Recommendation 2) that, following the commencement of the Regulation, the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection reviews the vehicle access permits issued for the Cooloola Recreational Area, and that the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef report the outcomes of these reviews to the House.

The committee also recommended (Recommendation 3) that subordinate legislation No. 263 Nature Conservation Legislation Amendment Regulation (No.3) 2014 and No. 264 Forestry (State Forests) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2014 be disallowed. These amendment regulations provided for the consolidation of forest reserves into existing national park and state forest areas. The committee was concerned that the proposed amendments may affect Queensland's national park estate and the level of protection and management principles for these areas.

In his written response to the committee's report, Hon Dr Stephen Miles MP, Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef, accepted Recommendation 1, rejected Recommendations 2 and did not respond to Recommendation 3.

Minister Miles, in his [response to the report tabled on 27 August 2015](#), explained his reasoning for not accepting Recommendation 2:

*...over 70,000 vehicle access permits were issued for the Cooloola Recreation Area between June 2014 and June 2015. Rainbow Beach vehicle permit fee exemptions only equated to 0.4% of the total number of vehicle access permits issued for the area. This suggests that any impacts from rainbow Beach exemptions is negligible and I do not believe that these exemptions would have led to any discernible increase in beach use, to unsustainable vehicle access, or any public safety or environmental impacts in the Cooloola recreation area. Also many rainbow Beach residents would have previously used the area under a paid permit, so any increase in vehicle use from the same residents as a consequence of the new exemption is likely to be negligible.*

### **3.4 Inquiry into the Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill 2015**

On 19 May 2015, the Member for Dalrymple, Mr Shane Knuth MP, introduced the Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill 2015. The Bill was referred to the committee in accordance with SO131 for inquiry and report.

The committee commenced its inquiry into this Bill during the final weeks of the 2014-15 financial year. The committee:

- agreed to a timetable for the inquiry
- identified and notified stakeholders of the inquiry, and invited written submissions
- received a private briefing from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries on the Queensland sugar industry and the history of legislation governing its operations.

#### 4 Committee expenditure

The committee had no revenue during 2014-15.

The committee is funded from the appropriation made to the Legislative Assembly. The expenditure of the committee from 27 March to 30 June 2015 is shown in the table below.

Item	\$
Staff salaries and related expenses <sup>1</sup>	77,969.00
Business travel	2418.14
Telecommunication costs	698.74
Meeting expenses, stationery, consumables and miscellaneous expenses	541.46
Printing and production	0.00
Consultants	0.00
<b>Expenditure Total</b>	<b>\$81,627.34</b>

<sup>1</sup> Figures for staffing expenditure shown above reflect a three person secretariat supporting the committee. The committee's staffing might have been supplemented with additional resources from general Committee Office staff during the year.

## 5 Meeting attendance record

The table below shows the attendance of committee members at committee meetings during the reporting period.

Mr William Gordon MP Member for Cook was a member of the committee between 27 March and 5 May 2015, though did not attend any meetings of the committee. Mr Gordon was discharged from the committee, and Mr Linus Power MP Member for Logan appointed to it, on 5 May 2015.

Meeting Date	Howard	Bennett	Gilbert	Gordon	Power	Katter	Sorensen
1/04/15	✓	✓	✓	x		✓	✓
21/04/15	✓	✓	✓	x		x	✓
27/04/15 (am)	✓	✓	✓	x		x	✓
27/04/15 (pm)	✓	✓	✓	x		x	✓
06/05/15	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓ (part)	✓
07/05/15	✓	✓	✓		✓	x	✓
20/05/15	✓	✓	✓		✓	x	✓
21/05/15	✓	✓	✓		✓	x	✓
03/06/15	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓ (part)	✓

**Notes:**

20/5/15 Mr Stephen Dickson MP, Member for Buderim, attended as replacement for the Member for Mount Isa [SO 202(1)]