



# ***AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT SUBCOMMITTEE***

**Members present:**

Mr JP Kelly MP (Chair)  
Mr JE Madden MP  
Mr LL Millar MP  
Mr PT Weir MP

**Staff present:**

Mr R Hansen (Committee Secretary)  
Ms S Stephan (Assistant Committee Secretary)

## **PUBLIC BRIEFING—INQUIRY INTO THE SAFER WATERWAYS BILL 2017**

### **TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

**WEDNESDAY, 9 AUGUST 2017**

**Brisbane**

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### Subcommittee met at 9.06 am

**CHAIR:** Good morning, everyone. I declare open this public briefing for the committee's inquiry into the Safer Waterways Bill 2017. On 25 May 2017 Mr Shane Knuth MP, member for Dalrymple, introduced the bill to parliament. The parliament has referred the bill to the Agriculture and Environment Committee for examination with a reporting date of 27 November 2017. My name is Joe Kelly. I am the member for Greenslopes and chair of the committee. With me here today are Mr Pat Weir, deputy chair and member for Condamine, and Mr Jim Madden, member for Ipswich West. We have formed a subcommittee for today's public briefing. The other members of the committee who are not here today due to other committee commitments are Mrs Julieanne Gilbert, member for Mackay; Mr Robbie Katter, member for Mount Isa; and Mr Lachlan Millar, member for Gregory. Mr Katter may join us at some point during the public briefing.

These proceedings are similar to parliament and are subject to the Legislative Assembly's standing rules and orders. The proceedings are being recorded by Hansard and broadcast live on the parliament's website. Media may be present and will be subject to my direction at all times. The media rules endorsed by the committee are available from committee staff if required. All those present today should note that it is possible you might be filmed or photographed during the proceedings. I ask everyone present to turn off their mobile phones or put them on to silent mode. Only committee members and invited witnesses may participate in the proceedings. As these are parliamentary proceedings, under the standing orders any person may be excluded from the hearing at the discretion or order of the committee.

The purpose of today is to assist the committee with its examination of the bill. We are going to hear from the member for Dalrymple, who has been kind enough to come along to brief the committee on this bill.

### **KNUTH, Mr Shane, Member for Dalrymple, Queensland Parliament**

**CHAIR:** Good morning, Shane. I invite you to make an opening statement briefing the committee after which we will put some questions to you.

**Mr KNUTH:** The Safer Waterways Bill 2017 has multiple policy objectives. The bill places greater value on human life than the lives of crocodiles and seeks to responsibly reduce the risk of crocodile attacks as much as possible. It aims to eliminate from our waterways all crocodiles that pose a threat to human life while protecting crocodiles from becoming endangered as a species.

The policy of prioritising human life over the lives of crocodiles came about in response to calls from North Queenslanders for action in response to an increased number of crocodile attacks. Communities across North Queensland are consistently reporting significant increases in crocodile numbers. Waterways in which people previously regularly swam are now infested with crocodiles.

From 1985 to 2015 the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection recorded 25 crocodile attacks in Queensland, seven of them fatal. In the past 12 months there have been three attacks, two of them fatal. This does not include attacks on stock or other animals. An effective crocodile management strategy is urgently required to save lives. The increase in crocodile numbers not only endangers human lives; it also adversely and significantly affects the way North Queenslanders live. There are life-saving, rowing and skiing clubs closing their doors because crocodiles are driving their members away.

The Safer Waterways Bill 2017 will ensure that crocodiles are removed by an authorised person if they are a threat to humans. This removal may involve killing or relocating the crocodile to an authorised farm. It would involve the removal of crocodiles from urban or public areas commonly used by people for recreation. If managed responsibly, crocodiles have the potential to be a great asset for Queensland rather than just a danger to people.

As well as protecting human lives, the Safer Waterways Bill 2017 aims to create a significant and sustainable crocodile industry in Queensland through controlled egg harvesting. The Northern Territory currently has a successful egg-harvesting program. Evidence suggests that egg harvesting can help sustain crocodile populations rather than diminish them and creates a huge economic opportunity which is currently untapped in Queensland.

Significantly, the Safer Waterways Bill 2017 gives power to landowners to apply to manage crocodiles on their land. Indigenous landowners have a connection with and understanding of the land and should be empowered to manage that land as they see fit. This bill allows them to apply to do that in relation to crocodiles. Non-Indigenous private landowners can apply for the same rights. As well as empowering landowners, it places a value on crocodiles and creates an unprecedented economic opportunity for landowners.

Authorised landowners will be empowered with regard to all aspects of crocodile management on their property. If a crocodile is on their property they may choose whether to kill it, have it relocated to a farm or let it remain on their property. If they choose for it to be euthanased, they may do this themselves or accept payment from another person who wishes to kill the crocodile. By placing value on crocodiles, landowners are unlikely to simply kill all the crocodiles on their land unless this is necessary for them to safely live and operate on that land. The landowner will likely see the value in crocodile eggs and the income that can be generated for landowners. If there are crocodile eggs on their land, they can choose to leave the eggs, harvest the eggs and sell them, or have someone else pay to come on their land and harvest them.

Ultimately, people who live in North Queensland are best placed to manage crocodiles, and people with experience managing crocodiles should have input into the ongoing management of crocodiles in Queensland. It is hoped that any time a crocodile is euthanased, whether it be on private property or on state land, the crocodile's carcass is fully utilised by, for example, selling teeth, meat or skins, or by producing blood and bone from unsaleable parts of the carcass.

The bill achieves the policy objectives outlined above by creating the Queensland Crocodile Authority. Under the bill, the Queensland Crocodile Authority would be required to remove all rogue crocodiles by killing them or moving them to an approved crocodile farm. Rogue crocodiles are defined as crocodiles posing a threat to human safety and include crocodiles in urban areas or waterways commonly used by people for recreation.

The bill legalises egg harvesting for permit holders and allows people to pay to hunt crocodiles on private land with the landowner's consent if the landowner has the Queensland Crocodile Authority's authorisation to so manage the land. The bill ensures that the Queensland Crocodile Authority is based in Cairns and it is expected that all staff would live in that area rather than fly in and fly out.

The bill also creates a board to provide recommendations to the Queensland Crocodile Authority. The board is to be made up of people with relevant experience in crocodile management to ensure that Queensland is getting the best possible advice on managing crocodile populations and creating a crocodile industry that will benefit the state and its landowners for many years to come.

Some views were expressed during consultation that no crocodiles should be killed or relocated. This does not align with the policy objectives of keeping people safe from crocs. Other views were expressed that the policy objective of keeping people safe from crocodiles could be achieved by relocating any problem crocodile. Consultation with experts suggests that crocodiles may become more dangerous once they have been relocated. Therefore, crocodiles should only be relocated to farms or properly managed reserves.

The consultation also revealed that, because there are so many crocodiles that require removal to keep people safe, it is very unlikely that there would be the desire from existing crocodile farms to house all of those crocodiles. Based on this extensive consultation, it has become clear that a combination of killing and relocation to farms is the best way to achieve the policy objectives. The costs associated with implementing the bill relate to the establishment and operation of the Queensland Crocodile Authority. These costs will be met from within the existing department's allocation.

The bill has been drafted with regard to the fundamental legislative principles as defined in section 4 of the Legislative Standards Act 1992 and is consistent with fundamental legislative principles. There has been extensive consultation. Significant consultation has been undertaken in the preparation of this bill including detailed engagement with affected communities through public forums and private engagement. Other major stakeholder groups consulted include Indigenous groups, local government, crocodile experts, professional fishing communities and other community groups, and federal members of parliament.

The bill creates a new authority within the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection to enable several activities for the management of crocodiles in Queensland waterways. State based crocodile management frameworks exist in other states and territories and include some of the activities contemplated in this bill. There may be some areas of the bill that may encroach on the

Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. However, consultation with the relevant Commonwealth government ministers has indicated a willingness to consider mechanisms that will ensure no conflict between this bill and the Commonwealth act exists.

With regard to the extensive consultation that we have undertaken, we visited the communities of Innisfail, Port Douglas and Mareeba. Robbie Katter has consulted with communities and Indigenous groups in Burketown and Normanton. There were also public consultations in Cairns and with local councils. There is great concern with regard to the explosion of crocodile numbers. This is also impacting on our international tourist market because when tourists come here all they see are crocodile warning signs. They hear about crocodile attacks, and if they swim in our waterways they could possibly be taken by a crocodile. We have introduced this legislation into this House because people are sick and tired of hearing about more studies and more counts. People want action.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, member for Dalrymple. Your bill seeks to establish an authority that has some responsibility for killing or removing crocodiles that pose a threat to human life. There is also the capacity for private landowners to make determinations about crocodiles that may exist on their property. I would assume that there are currently mechanisms in place to deal with crocodiles that are posing threats to human life. How is the authority that you are proposing to create different from the current arrangements that are in place?

**Mr Knuth:** That is a good question, Mr Chair. As is mentioned in the bill, there is currently a problem and the legislation currently in place is not working. What we are getting is counts and more studies. This bill clearly defines that an authority will be set up within the department of environment. A board will oversee that authority. The authority will have the responsibility for issuing a permit to a particular landowner to remove crocodiles, but at the same time the authority may see fit to not issue a permit based on significant and particular reasons. If landowners have a problem with a crocodile on their property—for example, if they go down to start a pump and there are crocs hanging around their waterway—they should have the right to remove that crocodile.

**CHAIR:** I imagine that in some properties the waterways would not be owned by the property owner. They would own the land but not the waterways and the crocodile is transient between the land and the water. Does that create any problems?

**Mr Knuth:** You will have crocodiles that will be transient. One minute the crocodile is here and the next minute he is 50 kilometres away. The reason they are having problems now is that the act does not clearly define one way to go about something or another. Under this bill it is proposed that an authority will be set up with a director. The director is appointed by the parliament of Queensland so it is not a political decision that is made. The authority is overseen by a board which will work with the authority on problems that arise as a result of crocodiles in a region.

The reason we did this is that we could see the complexity within the department, particularly when there is a director who lives in Brisbane who has no concept of croc management in North Queensland and Far North Queensland. Basically we have decisions being made by an area which does not have that understanding. Under this bill the authority will be based in Cairns. The authority will assess every aspect of crocodile management, whether it is crocodiles moving from one area to another, whether it is egg harvesting or whether it is a rogue croc that is in public areas or swimming areas. The authority will then report back to the parliament on decisions made in regard to croc removal.

**Mr WEIR:** I have a question regarding hunting. You are suggesting safari hunting in amongst it. The reason I am asking is that, probably like you, years ago I used to shoot kangaroos to supplement for a bit of money and I know that you have to be a fairly accurate shot. We do not want crocodiles wandering around out there that are wounded and are more dangerous than ever. How do you determine who can destroy a crocodile?

**Mr Knuth:** This bill states that there must be a course taken in regard to management, culling of crocodiles and egg harvesting. It is not about bringing someone in to kill a croc or harvest eggs. There will be a course provided by the authority before they can go out and kill crocodiles, so that will be put in place. If we look at Indigenous communities, in this bill it does not talk about croc safaris but it talks about giving permits to Indigenous communities to manage crocodiles in the area. Is it going to be absolutely perfect when you shoot a dingo? Can you wound it and it might end up at someone's place very cranky? You will never perfectly get it right but what we are doing is getting the soundest policy and support base possible to ensure that, if crocodiles are going to be shot, a management course is undertaken, and that is assessed by the authority.

**Mr WEIR:** You mentioned earlier an authorised person. Is that what you are referring to?

**Mr Knuth:** That is right. If a landowner would like to bring someone onto their land, he needs to ensure that person has some qualifications before removing that croc. Under the bill the authority makes the decision whether or not the landowner will receive a permit to remove those crocs, but the landowner has the right to bring someone else onto their land to remove those crocs. It is the same with egg harvesting. They might bring someone else, such as an Indigenous person, on to their land to remove the crocs, particularly in Cape York Peninsula, where there is a lot of land beside Aboriginal reserves. Every egg—and this is part of the legislation—that is harvested and every croc that is killed must be reported back to the authority. The authority will report to the parliament how many crocs have been killed, how they were killed, where they were killed and how many eggs were harvested. In the yearly report, when the director reports to the parliament you will know that there have been 5,000 crocs killed, which area they have been killed in, where the permits have been issued, how many crocs have been relocated to croc farms and how many crocs have been euthanased for blood and bone. Everything has to be reported back to the department. If there is an infringement of this, the authority can remove those permits from landowners and Indigenous landowners.

**Mr MADDEN:** Thank you very much for coming in today, Shane, and so clearly outlining your bill. My questions relate to the consultation with the federal government that you have already mentioned. Can you outline who you have consulted with in the federal government? What aspects of the bill does the federal government support? In that regard, I am particularly interested in whether they support safari hunting and egg harvesting.

**Mr Knuth:** In regard to your pinpointing safari hunting, you have to understand that there is no safari hunting within this legislation. It is not there.

**Mr MADDEN:** Good.

**Mr Knuth:** However, the minister in our consultation has indicated very strongly that if the state parliament steps in and introduces a scheme which involves culling—which they do now—he would not interfere with that process.

**CHAIR:** Can I clarify: is that the federal minister you are referring to?

**Mr Knuth:** That is right: Josh Frydenberg.

**Mr MADDEN:** Josh Frydenberg?

**Mr Knuth:** Yes.

**Mr MADDEN:** Not Barnaby Joyce?

**Mr Knuth:** No, so it would not interfere with that process.

**CHAIR:** Shane, what would be the benefits of having egg-harvesting arrangements in place in Queensland that mirror those of the Northern Territory?

**Mr Knuth:** I cannot remember the section which deals with egg harvesting, but we have been advised that croc farms are paying up to \$300,000 a year in purchasing those eggs so they can grow and develop them in croc farms. We see an economic benefit of egg harvesting here in Queensland but it will also be beneficial to the return of a particular community. In our consultation we found that Indigenous communities are very keen because they see that this is going to be an economic return to the community. If they see one croc farm that is paying \$300,000 from the Northern Territory, they understand and know that there will be a return for them here in Queensland.

The bill is also designed so that, as near as possible, there must be an economic return. We have a resource here, which is a croc. It is not only about shooting the croc or relocating it. As near as possible—and this will be assessed by the authority—there must be an economic return to the state with the shooting of that croc, whether it is selling the teeth, selling the hide, returning it for blood and bone or the egg harvesting. It is about an economic return to the state for removing and culling the crocodiles.

**CHAIR:** Shane, I grew up in North Queensland. You would not now swim in many of the areas that we used to swim in when I was younger. They are well signed to that effect. When I grew up in North Queensland, we had significant issues with marine stingers. There was plenty of community education. We adjusted our lifestyle to deal with the fact that there were certain times of the year when you simply should not or would not enter the water with any guarantee of safety. Why should we not simply adopt the same approach to crocodiles—that is, we educate people and we try to adjust our lifestyle to deal with the reality that there is a dangerous animal in a particular location?

**Mr Knuth:** One of the important aspects of travelling into North Queensland and the Wet Tropics—and you would probably remember this—is swimming in the freshwater swimming holes. I was talking to a landowner at El Arish. They had a little bit of a run from the rain and went for a swim.

Three days later, they came back and the water had cleared. They were looking down into that water and they did not know whether what they saw was a log. As they kept looking, they saw that it was a three-metre croc. He indicated that not since time began would they have believed that a croc could swim that far up into the fresh waterways where the locals swim.

There is an explosive increase in the number of crocodiles, so there is no threat to the crocs at the present time. They can move and they can attack. A lot of the bigger crocs are pushing the smaller crocs further upstream, which has caused problems in those favourite freshwater swimming holes. In the regions, we enjoy a quality of life where we can utilise the waterways. The waterways are our best resource. I know people from the Tablelands who would go down to the coast to swim in some of those swimming holes, but now they do not do that. We have to keep the kids active. There is an anger towards the croc from the younger generation, because they have stolen their recreation.

One particular story came out of the public meeting at Port Douglas. One of the barra fishermen went up to the Daintree. He said that before when he saw a croc it was exciting. He said now when he catches a barra there are crocs bigger than the boat fighting to grab and latch hold of the barra while he is trying to land it. Not only is he fighting the barra; he is trying to beat the crocs to land that barra. He has had massive crocs, with whopping big teeth, hit the boat. When it comes to doing something about it, all we hear is, 'We'll do another report.'

One of the tourist operators in Port Douglas said that when tourists asked if they could swim there she would say yes, because it was an acceptable risk. It was not guaranteed that you would come back alive but it was an acceptable risk. Now she says it is an unacceptable risk and she can no longer advise tourists to go out there. They feel that the tourist numbers have dropped, because people used to go there to stay at the resort and swim in the safe waterways, but it is no longer safe so they are losing tourists.

You have a good point: you can put up signs and educate people. However, we do not have big shopping centres and we do not have trains running at frequent schedules to get from A to B, but we have our water. If we educate people that there are crocs there and they should not go near the water but be smart, we take away our recreation and quality of life.

**CHAIR:** Is there any data that we can look at in terms of the impacts on croc populations as a result of the egg-harvesting practices that have occurred in the Northern Territory? I think they have been happening since the 1980s.

**Mr Knuth:** Yes, and it has worked very well, Joe. If you are asking me to take that as a question on notice, I am happy to provide that information.

**CHAIR:** If you are happy to take that on notice, that would be useful.

**Mr Knuth:** We have communicated with one of the experts in croc management who helped draw up the croc policy in the Northern Territory. His advice to us is that it is more or less a cycle: if you are getting an income from the eggs, you do not want to take the lot; you want to ensure there will be a certain number of crocs down the track. There is a cycle and you can still get the return. In the Northern Territory, egg harvesting has played a significant role in reducing the numbers without bringing the numbers down to extinction levels.

In regard to this bill, the director of the authority must assess two things. One is that he prioritises human life over the crocs. The board oversees him. He has to show the board that he is prioritising human life. Another clause within the bill tells us that you cannot reduce the croc numbers to the point of extinction, so there is a conservation aspect to the bill. Before I introduced the legislation we had the normal protesters who would protest to protect the croc. As we introduced the bill and those protesters went over it, they could see that the board must include someone with environmental expertise and also a representative of an Indigenous community and a representative of the recreation industry, looking at skiing and kayaking and lifesaving. There must be someone on the board with those skills. You must have someone who has an understanding of croc management. Of the people appointed, someone will have expertise in environmental conservation. Also, someone will know what it is like to be part of a rowing club that had 150 members and now has 25 members. That person may have had to say to their next-door neighbour, 'I would love your young fellow to join the rowing club, but we may not bring him back alive.' Once the rowing clubs could get out there and row and feel safe. Once they used to ski in the Johnstone River and they would be safe. Now if you ski in the Johnstone River and fall down, you are lucky to be alive. That is the situation now. Members of the board will have all of that sort of expertise, including environmental expertise. It is a good combination from a broad spectrum of people.

In regard to the authority, there is no doubt that things up north operate differently from how things operate in Brisbane. There is no way in the world you would want Far North Queenslanders making decisions on how things operate in Brisbane. That is why we have chosen to base the board in Cairns, which is the major area of the region, so that its members have an understanding of the aspects of that.

**Mr WEIR:** I am curious, and this probably goes to the cost a little: when somebody goes to remove a problem croc, usually they will catch a fairly large croc that has been in a lot of fights and scraps in its life. It is going to be scarred and the hide will be nothing special. We visited a crocodile farm in Rockhampton and we saw the enormous lengths they go to to keep those skins unscarred. What encouragement is there for people to spend maybe weeks trying to trap crocs that may not have a lot of resale value because they will be big, they will be old, they will be rank and the skins will be all scarred? What will we do to encourage that to happen? That is something that was expressed to us during our trip.

**Mr Knuth:** That is right: there is always going to be a cost factor in general. The landowners who receive the permits must report back to show the size of the croc, where it was shot, whether it was taken to an abattoir for blood and bone. With the amount of crocs that are in there at the moment, it will be very difficult to pull those crocodiles out of the waterways and relocate them to a croc farm, because they are going to cause havoc and they are going to be scarred. That is why the culling aspect comes in. The bill contains a protection that, as far as possible, we must get an economic return, because we know that it is going to be very difficult, particularly if you are up the cape, to bring that crocodile in. There are croc farms and abattoirs up on the cape that could take those crocs and give a return for them. The teeth are sold for a good dollar price. That is an aspect that could be looked at. We want to ensure there is a return.

However, if a croc is near a boat ramp and there is no doubt that that croc is a threat to the safety of people, it will be the responsibility of the authority and the council, or the authority may have a contractor who might be appointed, to remove that croc when it is reported. When that contractor removes or shoots the croc, they have to report back to the authority to say where the croc was relocated to or shot and what they did with the carcass. There is a time factor here. There are too many crocs out there to just trap them. Under this legislation, if a croc is hanging around, within 48 hours that croc has to be removed because it is a threat to public safety. It is at the discretion of the person who has been given the authority to do that to see if there will be an economic return or not. They may take the croc to the abattoir for blood and bone or, under his discretion, if he has a relationship with the croc farm, he can say, 'We can remove this croc and bring it to you and you might benefit from it.' That has to be at their discretion.

**Mr WEIR:** You briefly touched on the definition of 'threatening'. Someone may say, 'I'm being threatened by a savage dog that growls at me.' How do you decide that a croc is a threat? Who makes that decision?

**Mr Knuth:** Basically, if a croc comes up to a boat ramp, that is a threat. I want to define two areas with a rogue croc. The definition is that the croc is likely to attack, is behaving aggressively or has the potential to threaten public safety. If a croc is hanging around a boat ramp, it has the potential of being a threat. That croc should not be there. If a croc is in a freshwater swimming hole, we cannot say, 'It's got no chance of being a threat.' That has the potential of being a threat. We want to get rid of that croc within 48 hours. If someone on a boat says, 'We saw a croc 10 kilometres out to sea,' that is really not a big threat. It is a threat when it is around the public, but if it is way out there it is no good using that resource. No-one in their right mind would consider a crocodile 20 kilometres out to sea to be a threat to the public.

**Mr MADDEN:** Should your bill be passed by the parliament, which minister do you foresee administering the bill? Bear in mind that the Minister for Environment currently administers the Nature Conservation Act that deals with crocodiles. Which minister do you foresee administering your bill?

**Mr Knuth:** Being a member of parliament who is a member of the committee you would understand that, particularly when dealing with the Attorney-General, there are overlaps. When it comes to police and the Attorney's office, there is a lot of overlapping. There is the potential for overlap, but this bill would fall under the department of environment, which will come under the Minister for Environment. I would say that 95 per cent of this would fall under the Minister for Environment.

**CHAIR:** Say the authority issues a permit to a landholder to remove or kill crocodiles. Presumably, this is going to occur in relatively not densely populated areas; it will be in various fairly isolated places. Would there be a need to have an inspectorate aspect to this so that we can ensure that if a landholder is issued permits they are only taking the crocodiles they are entitled to take?

**Mr Knuth:** An inspectorate to—

**CHAIR:** How do we enforce the permits? Say I do not have a permit and I go and shoot crocodiles anyway or if I have a permit for, say, five crocodiles and I go and take 15, is there a mechanism for enforcement around that?

**Mr Knuth:** Clause 11 of the bill sets out the functions of the director. I will read out very quickly the functions of the director of the authority. I will read this quickly so it is in *Hansard*. The bill states—

- (1) The director has the following functions—
- (a) to take measures to minimise injuries and deaths caused by crocodiles in the State;
  - (b) to authorise persons to farm crocodiles in the State;
  - (c) to decide the number of crocodile eggs that may be harvested each year in any part of the State;
  - (d) to authorise persons to harvest crocodile eggs in any part of the State;
  - (e) to decide the number of crocodiles that may be culled each year in any part of the State;

This gives quite a lot of power to this authority. It goes on—

- (f) to authorise persons to carry out the culling of crocodiles in any part of the State;
- (g) to ensure the prompt management of rogue crocodiles by authorising persons to kill or relocate rogue crocodiles in any part of the State;
- (h) for indigenous land, State leasehold land or other land that is not State land—to authorise the owner of the land to—
  - (i) kill crocodiles on the owner's land; or
  - (ii) allow other persons to kill crocodiles on the owner's land, for payment of a fee or free of charge; or
  - (iii) harvest crocodile eggs on the owner's land; or
  - (iv) otherwise manage crocodiles on the owner's land;
- (i) to authorise persons to otherwise display, interact with, keep, take or use crocodiles or crocodile eggs in any part of the State;
- (j) to ensure the carcasses of all crocodiles killed under an authorisation granted by the director are dealt with so that, as far as possible, no part of a carcass is wasted;
- (k) to refer the suspected commission of offences relating to crocodiles or crocodile eggs to the police service—

and that probably answers the question too—

- (l) to coordinate research into, and the routine surveying, of—
  - (i) crocodile population numbers and distribution in the State; and
  - (ii) crocodile egg numbers and distribution in the State;
- (m) to promote the farming of crocodiles and the harvesting of crocodile eggs in the State;
- (n) to investigate viability of the use of State land to farm crocodiles ...
- (o) to declare and manage crocodile reserves;
- (p) to make recommendations to Parliament about crocodile management in the State;

With regard to the responsibilities of that authority, it is a very broad spectrum. If we are looking at a very detailed issue that may arise with this authority, we have given them a very broad spectrum so they can deal with the detailed information that does come up.

**CHAIR:** That concludes the briefing. Thank you, member for Dalrymple, for attending today to brief the committee. For your information, we did visit a crocodile farm in Yeppoon two weeks ago. The intention of the committee is to hold public hearings here in Brisbane and in Cairns. We would also like to, if possible, visit an Indigenous community that is either interested in or already engaged in egg harvesting. We would seek your guidance in relation to that. If you could assist—

**Mr Knuth:** We could probably provide advice to you by no later than tomorrow of an Indigenous community—

**CHAIR:** If you could provide that to the secretariat that would be useful. We would appreciate your help in that matter. You have taken one question on notice. If we could have the response to that by the close of business next Wednesday, 16 August, that would be good. Thank you to the Hansard reporters. A transcript of these proceedings will be available on the committee's parliamentary web page. I would like to remind all of the listeners or viewers today that the closing date for lodging written submissions on the bill is next Friday, 18 August. If you require further information you can get that from our website or call our secretariat staff on 1800504022. I declare this public briefing for the committee's inquiry into the Safe Waterways Bill 2017 closed.

**Subcommittee adjourned at 9.52 am**