

~~Referral to the Finance and Administration Committee~~

~~Mr SPEAKER: Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Finance and Administration Committee.~~

~~Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date~~

~~Hon. CW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (12.03 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—~~


~~That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Finance and Administration Committee report to the House on the Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 22 May 2015.~~

~~Question put—That the motion be agreed to.~~

~~Motion agreed to.~~

EXHIBITED ANIMALS BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing) (12.03 pm): I present a bill for an act to provide for exhibiting and dealing with particular animals and to amend this Act, the Biosecurity Act 2014, the Nature Conservation Act 1992 and the regulations mentioned in schedule 3 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Agriculture and Environment Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Exhibited Animals Bill 2015.

Tabled paper: Exhibited Animals Bill 2015, explanatory notes.

Today I am pleased to introduce the Exhibited Animals Bill 2015. The bill will reform the regulation of a small but significant contributor to Queensland's economy—the exhibited animals industry. The industry contributes about \$100 million to the Queensland economy. It employs 1,000 Queenslanders, adds to the experience of overseas and interstate tourists and provides educational and cultural experiences for Queenslanders of all ages. It includes large zoos, aquaria, theme parks and wildlife parks; mobile wildlife demonstrators who exhibit at community and private events; circuses; and magicians. The reforms contained in the bill were first proposed under the Bligh Labor government in 2008. It is largely based on the Exhibited Animals Bill 2014 that lapsed when parliament was dissolved for the 2015 election.

The legislation that currently regulates the animal exhibition industry is unnecessarily complex and makes it tough for businesses working to create jobs and grow the economy. There are provisions spread across four acts: the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002, the Fisheries Act 1994, the Nature Conservation Act 1992 and the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001. The six overlapping and inconsistent licensing frameworks under the current legislation are just the beginning of the complexity. The way in which animal welfare, pest establishment, disease spread and safety risks are managed under the current legislation is inconsistent. This is problematic because keeping wildlife for any purpose involves risks: some animals may be dangerous; escaped exotic animals may establish as pests with consequences for the economy, environment and social amenity; animals may carry disease; and keepers may lack sufficient facilities and expertise to adequately care for animals with complex needs, resulting in animal welfare issues and high mortality rates.

The existing legislation does not adequately or appropriately manage the risks associated with animal exhibition. There are also gaps in the coverage of some animal welfare and safety risks. This bill will meet community expectations for risk management by requiring exhibitors to actively manage the animal welfare, biosecurity and safety risks associated with exhibited animals and any adverse impacts of an event they might cause. Critically, it will address those risks that fall through the gaps in the current legislative framework. The bill imposes a general exhibition and dealing obligation on all those involved in exhibition and dealing with exhibited animals to prevent or minimise risks to animal welfare, biosecurity and safety. This will ensure that such risks will be better managed in future.

The current licencing frameworks mean that some exhibitors need several licences, each with their own processes and fees. In addition, exhibitors can only keep some animals for some types of exhibition. Some animals cannot be exhibited at all, even if the associated risks can be managed.

One of the first actions of the Palaszczuk government was to provide some immediate relief to businesses being hampered by this last problem. Currently, Queensland zoos and film and television productions can only access exotic species that are listed in regulation. They cannot access other species, even if the associated risks could be managed. Some species are not listed because they pose a very high pest establishment risk, but there are other species that are not listed simply for historical reasons. The result is that Queensland zoos have been unable to participate in captive breeding programs for some endangered exotic species simply because they are not listed. There are some other species, such as meerkats, that many Queenslanders would love to see and which are being kept in other states while our industry is being left behind. It recently impacted on a particularly significant film production that created hundreds of jobs on the Gold Coast. The Palaszczuk government has added six new species to the list of species in regulation which will allow Queensland zoos and film and television productions to apply to keep these species.

017 This interim measure will give Queensland businesses more opportunities and signals this government's commitment to work closely with businesses to create jobs and grow the economy. As a result, meerkats, Patagonian mara, capybara, veiled chameleons or Cape porcupines might just be coming to a zoo near you. Adding the additional species has provided some small relief for the animal exhibition industry, but it does not address the underlying problems with the current legislation. That is exactly what this bill will do.

The Exhibited Animals Bill 2015 will create a new regulatory and licencing framework specifically for the animal exhibition industry. The bill will streamline and simplify the licensing of exhibitors. A single licence will replace the six fragmented schemes under current legislation.

The bill will create new opportunities for Queensland businesses by ensuring that future licensing decisions are based on risks, not lists. It will allow exhibitors to keep almost any animal for any type of exhibition, provided they can manage the risks. That means opportunities for business to exhibit a greater range of species in Queensland, provided the risks can be minimised, and gives them the flexibility they need to grow the economy.

Licensing decisions will respond to a management plan explaining the activities the exhibitor proposes to undertake and how they will minimise animal welfare, biosecurity and safety risks. The only restriction will be that the species with the highest pest potential will need to be based in a fixed exhibit because that is the most reliable way to control the risks associated with those animals. The flexibility of this risk based approach will be complemented by regular inspection and monitoring.

I want to acknowledge that risk management in the industry, particularly in relation to the welfare of exhibited animals, has improved considerably over recent years. However, further improvement is needed, particularly behind the scenes, to avert future incidents and meet growing community expectations. Inspections will generally be charged to exhibitors with the frequency of inspections dependent on the exhibitor's previous compliance record on managing animal welfare, biosecurity and safety risks. This will create a financial incentive for best practice.

To encourage industry to take more responsibility for driving future improvements in risk management, a report by an accredited assessor could generally be relied on for deciding renewal applications. However, I want to assure honourable members that safeguards within the bill will maintain the integrity of the private assessment scheme. For example, accredited assessors will be required to disclose any conflicts of interest.

Another feature of the bill is the introduction of uniform minimum exhibition requirements. These will ensure that animals kept under an exhibition licence are actually exhibited rather than being kept for private enjoyment. This is important because the species to which these requirements apply cannot be kept in Queensland for private recreation.

This bill is a blueprint for the future of the animal exhibition industry in Queensland that creates opportunities for businesses to grow while improving the management of animal welfare, biosecurity and safety risks. The Palaszczuk government will continue to work with exhibitors to ensure that the industry has a bright future in Queensland. We will work together to foster economic development by restoring confidence and creating jobs. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. WS BYRNE (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing) (12.13 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 SPEAKER: Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Agriculture and Environment Committee.

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

Hon. WS BYRNE (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing) (12.13 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Agriculture and Environment Committee report to the House on the Exhibited Animals Bill by 8 May 2015.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

~~ADDRESS-IN-REPLY~~



~~**Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algerie—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Science and Innovation) (12.15 pm): It is an honour that I, the first Aboriginal woman elected to this place, be given the opportunity to move—~~

~~That the following address be presented to the Governor in reply to the speech delivered by His Excellency in opening this, the 55nd Parliament of Queensland—~~

~~May it please Your Excellency—We the members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland wish to assure Your Excellency of our continued respect for the Crown and loyalty to the system of government in this state and to tender our thanks for the speech with which you opened the first session.~~

~~The various measures to which Your Excellency referred and all other matters that may be brought before us will receive our careful consideration and we shall strive to deal with them so that our endeavours may contribute to the advancement and the prosperity of the people of this state.~~

~~Let me begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we gather and, in doing so, let me acknowledge the more than 3,000 generations of the Turrbal peoples and the Yugerra peoples, who have performed ceremonies, conducted trade and maintained cultural practices on this land. May I also acknowledge all of our elders, those who have passed and those who are still with us, guiding us into the future. Let me also pay special respect to my family: my mother, Lyn; my aunts Evelyn Parkin and Merle Cashman; and members of the Logan elders, Aunt Peggy Tidyman and Aunt Betty McGrady, who on my swearing in to this parliament performed a moving blessing, a ritual of support. It is this way of beginning that fills me with incredible pride and provides me the grounding from which to speak my words in this place.~~

~~I am a proud Nunukul/Nughi woman of the Quandamooka nation, which takes in the islands and waters of Moreton Bay. As my grandmother was a Kanjuu woman, I also have ancestral ties into Queensland's far north. I pay tribute to all of my ancestors, including those of my mother's people from European nations. I come to this place as a member of this parliament, recognising the profound role that I play as a representative of the people of Algester. Being chosen by your local community to represent them is an incredible act of trust and I thank the people of my electorate for putting their trust in me. I remind myself every day of that trust and I hold it in the highest regard and with the desire to honour that trust in all I do.~~

~~I also recognise the significance of this moment in our state's history. I acknowledge that, as the first Aboriginal woman elected to the Queensland parliament and the first Indigenous minister in this House, I have an additional responsibility: one that holds the expectations and hopes of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and of those who value and seek out diversity in our civic society. But, of course, I am not alone in this responsibility. I acknowledge also the new member for Cook, who follows in footsteps created more than 40 years ago by Queensland's first Indigenous state parliamentarian, the earlier member for Cook, Mr Eric Deeral. Uncle Eric lit the beacon for people like me and other aspiring politicians, like Cheryl Thompson, a Iningai woman, who also ran at the last state election in the seat of Gregory. Although not elected this time, I hope to see Cheryl sit in this place in the future.~~