




Speech By  
**Mark Boothman**

**MEMBER FOR THEODORE**

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## **NATURE CONSERVATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (2.59 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. From the outset I thank the committee for all the work that they have done on the bill. I thank the shadow minister for his contribution, which was made some time ago now, back in August. Nature conservation is very important to all of us and certainly there are a lot of conservation groups in my area. The main purpose of the bill relates to bees in national parks. As somebody who has a bit of history to do with orchards and farming activity, I felt it would be remiss of me not to make a contribution on the bill.

Having a good healthy bee population is critically important for agriculture and the pollination of crops and orchard trees. We have to remember that almond trees require pollination as do avocado— I will talk more about avocados—macadamia, mango, apple and citrus trees. Many varieties of trees rely on pollination and it would be very detrimental not to have healthy bee populations. Fruits such as berries, melons, tomatoes and pumpkins all require some sort of pollination, which relies on good healthy bee populations. Many farmers bring in bees from other areas. In the Gold Coast hinterland we have very good beekeepers who are well and truly active. My parent's property benefits from that activity.

The avocado is quite an interesting tree. There are two varieties of avocado tree. There is an A type and a B type avocado tree. A type avocados include Hass, Lamb Hass, Pinkerton, Reed and Wurtz varieties. The flowers of those trees will open as female in the morning and in the afternoon they become male. You need to have cross-pollination from other trees such as B type avocado trees, which include Fuerte, Shepard, Sharwil and Zutano. It is critically important that you have the two varieties together and a decent bee population locally because of the issues around the timing of the flowers changing from female to male. It is very important to have very active bee populations in these type of industries. At the moment avocados, especially in the southern areas, are well and truly in flower. Down our way, macadamia trees would have flowered in August or September. I also know a bit about macadamias.

Keeping bee populations in the national parks is crucial, especially for vulnerable species of macadamia. The Bulberin nut is listed as endangered. Obviously, a lot of its native habitat has been destroyed. Having bee populations in the national parks is crucial for the survival of that species. It does not get the same focus that is given to the hybrid macadamia trees, such as the Beaumont macadamia. The Beaumont is a very successful hybrid tree that is very good at nutting, far more so than some of the less desirable species. In the wild, the endangered macadamia nut tree species are vulnerable so we need to ensure that there are healthy bee populations.

I agree with the shadow minister for the environment, the member for Bonney, who talked about allowing beekeepers to access national parks in perpetuity. Twenty years really is not a long time when it comes to keeping the bee population healthy so it is very important that we allow access in perpetuity.

The bill goes into other areas, such as the capacity to deal with individuals who pretend to be park rangers and I agree with those objectives. The member for Bonney's amendments are well considered and we should accept them. I ask the government to understand that we need clarity going forward to ensure that access is not just for 20 years, because 20 years will pass very quickly. I hope my lesson on avocados—

**Mr Lister:** Can you bring some to parliament?

**Mr BOOTHMAN:** I will have to bring some more to parliament. We need to understand that, when it comes to the agricultural industry in Queensland, pollination by bees is worth \$2 billion each year. That shows how crucial it is that we look after beehives and ensure that beekeepers can access national parks long after the 20-year period.