



Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland
GOLD COAST BRANCH
162 Maudsland Road
Oxenford Queensland 4210

Celebrating 52 years

Nature Conservation Agreement July 17

7th July 2017

Committee Secretary
Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House
George St, Brisbane.
aec@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Sir/ Madam,
Re The Nature Conservation (Special Wildlife Reserves) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017

Wildlife Queensland Gold Coast Branch wishes to advise the Committee that our members fully support this legislation. It is pleasing to see Queensland leading the way with this new reserve status, which will increase the protected estate at much less cost than acquiring land of high conservation value and designating it a national park.

With the current clearing of 300,000 Hectares of native vegetation each year often illegally occurring in Queensland resulting in the death and injury of too many of our native wildlife, the result is wholesale destruction of wildlife in those ecosystem which require a variety of plants & animals & a minimum safe area for their survival. Human intrusion causes continuous fragmentation of those areas already legally preserved.

Our native Australian ecosystems work without pay 24hours a day 7 days a week to supply the humans with the oxygen they need to breathe - alpine atmospheric research has recorded 15% less oxygen in the air since recordings began in the 1970s. We need healthy ecosystems to survive into the future - so firstly you need stop allowing land clearing since this costs nothing & secondly pay people to regrow degraded land.

It is essential that other methods of protecting our wildlife and native flora are adopted. This Bill will allow this with the Special Wildlife Reserves, which have the added benefit of being

protected from mining and other damaging activities. It is particularly desirable that the status runs with the land in perpetuity.

It is also good to see that there is sufficient interest in conservation from land managers to want to enter into collaborative agreements with the Government for these new Special Wildlife Reserves. The degree of consultation with potential reserve land managers indicates that there should not be too many teething problems with the new legislation.

It is noted that it is possible for the Special Wildlife Reserve status to be revoked by Government. Obviously this would not be a desirable outcome, however we noted that there does not appear to be anything in the legislation about processes should the land manager fail to, in whole or part, carry out the conditions of the agreement leading to degradation of the land. Perhaps this will be in the regulations, but that is not clear.

It would be a signal of your Palaszczuk Government's genuine intention to implement this Bill if you pass it within 1 or 2 months rather than at some future date & restore the public's faith in Governments which have a history of making promises which they do not keep after election.

Wildlife Queensland Gold Coast hopes that this legislation encourages many land holders to commit to improving the conservation of our unique wildlife and enter into agreement with the Government with Special Wildlife Reserves.

Yours sincerely
Sally Spain
President



* Attachment

Special Reserves July17

Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef
The Honourable Steven Miles

Sunday, October 30, 2016

Environment Minister announces Special Wildlife Reserve to protect private land

The Queensland Government is preparing changes to legislation that will create a new “top shelf” class of protected area, called a Special Wildlife Reserve.

Environment Minister Dr Steven Miles said today (Sunday) the proposed amendments to the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* would protect private land of outstanding conservation significance from activities that may affect their natural values.

“The laws that the Palaszczuk Government will deliver next year will create entirely new opportunities for charities, the community and the private sector to partner with the government to add value to conservation,” Dr Miles said.

“What is going to be created here is a new top-shelf offering where private funders will be able to create reserves of land which have the same legal status and protection as a national park.

“Special Wildlife Reserves will help to conserve and protect the diversity of plants, animals and ecosystems found in Queensland,” he said.

Dr Miles said the amendments would protect land that contributed to a “comprehensive, adequate and representative protected area estate”.

“Special Wildlife Reserves will also provide a secure environment for conservation organisations and philanthropists seeking to invest in the protection and management of Queensland’s outstanding natural areas,” he said.

“Potential impacts on other interests in land, including native title, have been identified and will be addressed through legislative amendments”.

Not-for-profit Queensland Trust for Nature general manager Nerida Bradley applauded the Palaszczuk Government “for its forward thinking”.

“This is an extremely positive move in terms of providing a much higher level of protection for biodiversity on private land,” Ms Bradley said.

“When private landholders want to work with Government to protect parts of their land, these changes will really improve the tools in the government’s toolbox.

“At the moment the highest level of protection is only available when State owned land is set aside as national park, and these changes acknowledge the importance of protecting privately owned land of equal significance to Queensland’s bio-diversity.

“That puts Queensland ahead of the rest of the nation to some degree,” she said.

Dr Miles said further consultation on the proposed legislation will be undertaken with stakeholders prior to debate, in addition to upcoming public consultation on a broader protected area strategy for Queensland.

“This will be an opportunity for business to contribute to work that ordinarily the State Government does,” Dr Miles said.

“Many businesses are not just looking to tick a box and comply with the obligation to plant trees that replace trees that they cut down. They want to know the contribution they are making will last in perpetuity.”