



Speech by

**Dr LESLEY CLARK**

**MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER**

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**ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS, BARRON RIVER ELECTORATE**

**Dr CLARK** (Barron River—ALP) (7.11 p.m.): My decision to recontest the seat of Barron River was very much influenced by the fact that I had what one might call unfinished business, that is, initiatives or projects that I started on behalf of the community but which I had not been able to bring to fruition during my previous term. A number of those projects related to coastal management and protection issues that the previous Government and member for Barron River put on the backburner, reflecting the low priority they gave to those issues and to the environment.

Those projects included the review of the Trinity Inlet Management Plan, the preparation of the Cairns regional coastal management plan, the gazettal of the State marine parks for Trinity Inlet and the Marlin Coast and, finally, the extension of the fish habitat reserve over Trinity Inlet. I am taking a personal interest in progressing all of those issues, because the rate of development and the need to create jobs means that it is essential that these coastal management and planning tools are finalised so that everyone is clear on just what kind of development is appropriate, where it is best located and how the approval process will operate so that we can protect and manage our natural coastal assets, which are such a critical part of our lifestyle in far-north Queensland, while at the same time not unnecessarily constraining appropriate development.

I am again a member of the committee that is overseeing the TIMP review. We hope to release the draft of the revised plan for public comment soon, but with an increased role for community consultation as compared with that proposed under the coalition Government. Recently, I attend a two-day workshop for stakeholders who contributed their views as part of the preparation of the regional coastal plan for the Cairns area, which should go out to public consultation in mid next year. I am confident that the State marine park proposals, which for three years have been virtually in limbo, are going to be released very shortly for a final round of public consultation. I will be pressing for gazettal by the end of the year.

The other proposal that was put on the backburner by the previous Government was the extension of the fish habitat reserve over Trinity Inlet, which was recommended in 1992 in the Trinity Inlet Management Plan, which I helped to develop as chair of the original steering committee. So last week when the Minister for Minister for Primary Industries, Henry Palaszczuk, came to Cairns to announce the extension of the Trinity Inlet fish habitat reserve, for me it was the culmination of a personal campaign that actually goes back well over a decade to the time when I was president of the Cairns branch of the Wildlife Preservation Society in the 1980s and fighting to protect Trinity Inlet from a whole range of major commercial, residential and tourism developments when there was, of course, at that time a National Party Government.

Of course, I was not alone in my campaign. I would like to mention briefly some of the key players of that time. In fact, I can go back over 20 years and mention people who have been fighting to protect the Cairns mudflats and Trinity Inlet. I would like to recognise Joan Wright, the foundation president of the WPSQ, who began the campaign to protect the mudflats where we have many species of migratory wading birds that come to Cairns every year from as far away as Siberia. In the mid 1980s, there was Dr Mike Mansfield, who formed the Trinity Bay and Inlet Society and who was instrumental in stopping pollution flowing into the Cairns inlet from the city dump and drawing attention to the ecological importance of Admiralty Island in the heart of Trinity Inlet. His work and campaigning led to sweeping change in the city council and Keith Goodwin was elected as the Mayor. He campaigned very hard with Councillor Rose Blank to protect the inlet. Of course, he was supported by Councillor Desley

Boyle, who is now a member of this House. Councillor Tom Pyne, the Mayor of Mulgrave Shire, was also a part of that campaign to provide protection for Trinity Inlet. Central to that has been the declaration of the habitat reserve, which covers some 7,500 hectares of mangroves, mudflats and seagrass beds and is listed on the register of the National Estate in recognition of its environmental values.

It would be inappropriate to conclude without also acknowledging the work of the DPI officers in the northern fisheries centre in Cairns, particularly Rob Coles, who has been really instrumental in progressing this particular gazettal. I recognise the work that he has carried out. In terms of what is going to be allowed in the fish habitat reserve—obviously, very, very little. We will have boating—we can have fishing, both commercial and recreational—but any kind of development apart from boat ramps and jetties is going to be prohibited totally. That will ensure the protection of Trinity Inlet and its environmental values for future generations.

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