



Speech by

# RACHEL NOLAN

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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Hansard 1 August 2001

## NATIONAL PARKS

**Ms NOLAN** (Ipswich—ALP) (6.36 p.m.): I speak in support of the amended motion and I do so from a perspective that covers the whole spectrum of the debate. I grew up riding horses and would love to ride parts of the national trail. At the same time, I consider myself to be an environmentalist and I do a lot of bushwalking and mountain biking. I spend a lot of time in the bush that we are talking about.

The South-East Queensland Forest Agreement has provided unparalleled opportunities for greater integration and involvement of the community in conservation, recreational planning and management. This approach to work with communities is a key principle in this government's parks master plan.

The master plan will guide the development of parks over the next 20 years and lift the standard of park management to better meet community expectations and needs. This is the first comprehensive stocktake of current management and planning for the future in the 25-year history of the parks service. The South-East Queensland Forest Agreement working groups are another way that this government is bringing together all aspects of the community.

The master plan outlines this government's plan to work with local communities, recreational users, traditional owners, neighbours and commercial operators. The working groups demonstrate the consultation process that is being implemented successfully on the ground. This process is a practical way of linking people with parks.

In the last 25 years, managing the parks system has become more challenging, complicated and expensive. There are now greater demands and pressures on the Queensland parks system than there were a generation ago. The community has higher expectations for effective, efficient and open management.

The South-East Queensland Forest Agreement working groups integrate parks with communities. As the population grows, these areas will become more and more valued and appreciated. They need to be properly managed. Part of the government's strategy to do this is the amalgamation of the Department of Natural Resources' forest management with QPWS. This has brought together a team of people with the skills to more effectively manage a range of protected areas, their different uses and the values they contain. Through a coordinated approach to conservation planning and management, we are improving the protection of our valued environmental areas. In developing good working relationships and partnerships with all levels of government, we are building community ownership and involvement in protecting the environment. The agreement gives real life to the communities' involvement in practical, productive and local conservation outcomes.

The scare campaign that recreational users will be locked out is just that. It is petty politics that has not worked and has no basis in fact. We have proved by the process so far that the community is being involved and will continue to have a say in the future sustainable use of these areas. This applies to conservation and recreational users alike, and will deliver a world-class system of forest reserves.

If we were to walk away from this process, we would be turning our backs on the very communities we are here to represent. It is time members opposite made the philosophical shift. We are custodians, not owners, of the country. We have a duty to protect it and share it amongst uses. It is

irresponsible to think, as some here do, that if protecting our environment is detrimental to personal or commercial interest there is an option to just take our bat and go home. This government's commitment to the adoption of a parks master plan will ensure that national parks continue to provide Queenslanders with a wide range of benefits.

Ipswich people are regular users of the protected area estate in south-east Queensland. Areas like Glenrock and Main Range provide valuable recreational opportunities for us. As I said, I do a lot of walking and running up there. As a community, we are grateful that these places are maintained as a sanctuary for us.

Queensland protected areas generate major environmental, economic and social benefits. They host more than 12.5 million visitors and contribute more than \$1.2 billion each year. Surely the blend of good economics and good conservation is to be promoted and expanded. If members opposite were serious about the welfare of regional and rural Queensland, they would be an active part of this agreement, because it delivers a future of certainty, economic benefits and jobs to the communities they seek to represent.

The QPWS will continue to work with those regional and rural communities. The working groups will continue to enable a wide range of community groups interested in Queensland parks to provide their feedback on the future management of forest areas. This will result in clearly stated principles for park management and identify what needs to be done to make it work. In the future, south-east Queensland people will appreciate our environmental legacy and they will be part of a community that understands and contributes to the management of those parks.

Time expired.

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