



Speech by

**Mr T. MALONE**

**MEMBER FOR MIRANI**

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Hansard 12 December 2001

#### **HOMEVALE NATIONAL PARK**

**Mr MALONE** (Mirani—NPA) (7.25 p.m.): Many members of this House have heard me talk before of the Homevale National Park, which is inland from Mackay in the Nebo district. Homevale National Park was bought by the Goss government in the early 1990s as a working station. Including leases associated with the property, the park is about 80,000 acres. An optimistic estimate of the land suitable for national park use is about one-eighth of that on the escarpments of the Eungella Range and Mount Britton.

There is a real problem with the national park in that it was a working station. A very considerable amount of the station had been cleared to allow improved pastures to be placed over the land. Over time the National Parks and Wildlife Service has removed cattle from the property. Over the last year there has been a very low number of cattle running on the property and as of this year none at all. The improved pasture obviously grows to a great extent and during the dry weather this huge body of grass dries off to a tinder dry stage. One must take into consideration the properties that neighbour that national park. They endeavour with great difficulty to stop fires either entering the park or coming from the park into their land. Over a period of three weeks this year, more than 100 firefighters fought fires around and in the national park. There were some pretty hairy incidents where people's lives were placed in danger not only because of fire in the national park but also because of the hot and dry windy conditions and the steepness of the country.

I implore the Minister for Environment to look at this situation and possibly lease back some of the park to neighbouring properties so that the amount of grass and material on the land can be reduced to realistic levels and therefore be safer for the whole area. I also implore the minister to ensure that the Environment Department acts as a good neighbour to all the neighbouring properties so that they do not have to worry about fires in the national park every year and expose themselves to life-threatening situations trying to fight them.

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