



Speech by

Hon. D. WELLS

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

Hansard 27 November 2002

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Sustainable Parks Program

Hon. D. M. WELLS (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Environment) (10.00 a.m.): The Queensland government is about to embark on an Australia first—a sustainable parks program. In developing the sustainable parks program, my department will showcase sustainable management of energy, water and wastes in our national parks and forest reserves. The pilot phase of the sustainable parks program carried out earlier this year involved a series of environmental performance audits of Moreton Island, Carnarvon, Girraween and Fitzroy Island National Parks, and Glen Rock Regional Park.

The pilot clearly showed that marked improvements in park sustainability could be achieved by introducing smarter design to improve the way energy, water and wastes are managed. The Environmental Protection Agency has used information collated during the pilot as the basis for introducing a comprehensive sustainable parks program.

Under this program the Environmental Protection Agency will improve sustainability of its parks by installing: renewable energy power systems, energy efficient lighting and electrical appliances, gas cooking and space heating equipment, rainwater tanks for visitor facilities, water flow reduction, dual flush toilet systems, solar barbecues and recycling bins. We are also in the process of speaking to camping operators to come on board to showcase their environmentally friendly camping equipment.

Queensland is home to some of the world's most spectacular national parks. More than 13 million people visit Queensland's national parks each year. A sustainable parks experience will be good for families as it will showcase how they can participate in reducing energy and waste not only in their own homes but also when they go on camping holidays. As a result of the machinery of government changes effected by the honourable the Premier at the start of this term of parliament, a critical mass of experts were transferred into my department to join the Sustainable Industries Division. It occurred to me that this made possible a synergy between Sustainable Industries and the Parks Division. That synergy has led to this achievable vision: a vision of national parks that not only showcases the awe-inspiring splendour of Australia's landscape but also demonstrates our ability not to destroy it; a vision of a natural heritage protected by, rather than harmed by, modern technology; and a vision of a human playground without a human footprint. The labours of nature's many ages will be protected and vindicated by appropriate modern technology. To achieve this vision will take many years but the first sustainable national park will be launched prior to Christmas.