



Speech by

Hon. D. WELLS

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

Hansard 5 December 2002

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Great Walks of Queensland

Hon. D. M. WELLS (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Environment) (10.11 a.m.): Today I will launch the government's Great Walks of Queensland initiative. This is a \$10 million project to establish six mid-distance walking tracks in some of Queensland's most spectacular places. The Great Walks will be developed in the Gold Coast hinterland, the Blackall ranges on the Sunshine Coast—

Mr Wellington: Hear, hear!

Mr WELLS: I thank the honourable member for Nicklin for his support for the project. There will be further Great Walks on Fraser Island, the Mackay highlands, the Whitsunday coast and the Wet Tropics. Each Great Walk will provide a three- to four-day wilderness experience for the adventurous walker with short walk components that can be completed within two hours to a day. This means that less adventurous walkers, tourists and families will be able to enjoy these beautiful locations and campsites with greater convenience. Water, toilets and shelter will be provided at suitable intervals along the length of the Great Walk. Each Great Walk will provide challenges and rewards for walkers—spectacular scenery, mountains and gorges, Queensland's unique wildlife, historical sites and the opportunity to experience our rich natural and cultural heritage.

Perhaps most importantly, the Great Walks will offer ideal opportunities for people who seek to break away from the pace of modern life, and I would advise honourable members to make their constituents aware of this opportunity. Over the past 12 months the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service has identified and assessed a range of options for the route selection of each Great Walk. This has involved feasibility studies, site planning, impact assessment and community consultation. In January I will visit four of the sites for Great Walks in Queensland and meet with the community, interest groups and rangers.

The four concept papers developed so far provide information on the route, features and facilities of each Great Walk. They describe each walk's natural and cultural values and geological features. The concept papers also cover logistical and planning issues, implementation schedules and estimated time frames for completion of each section within a Great Walk. Maps of the Great Walks will be on display showing the location and context of each walk. The Great Walks of Queensland will be progressively opened over the next four years. I invite honourable members to join me in celebrating the progress of this exciting government initiative on the Speakers Green today at 12 o'clock.