



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR KAWANA

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NATURAL RESOURCES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr CUMMINS (Kawana—ALP) (4.32 p.m.): The Natural Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2003 proposes to amend five pieces of legislation. The Beattie government has consistently led the way in the field of vegetation management. In aiming for a fair, consistent and practical approach to managing all Queensland's native vegetation, the government recognises the need to adjust the legislative framework surrounding vegetation management to meet the state's changing needs. This government is serious about balancing sustainable, economic land use with the need to protect the environment and maintain biodiversity. It is supported in this by the majority of landholders who recognise that their long-term future depends on environmentally sustainable land management now.

Both the young and those of us not so young on the Sunshine Coast—and indeed across Queensland—appreciate and respect fauna and flora. I would like to mention where this government is basically putting its money where its mouth is. We hear criticism from those opposite, but I know that this state government is working hard to ensure that we revegetate certain areas, and I refer to Elanda Point, which is located within the Great Sandy National Park, and which is situated five kilometres from Boreen Point on the Sunshine Coast. This state government has signed up its 12,600 cars to a national tree planting initiative as part of its commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and protecting the environment. The planting of 70,000 native trees began on Wednesday, 5 March 2003 at Elanda Point in an area that is now part of the Great Sandy National Park, which previously had been damaged by excessive logging and grazing.

A total of about 214,000 trees are being planted in southern Queensland as part of the Greenfleet initiative. That represents the largest commitment by any organisation. The Elanda Point planting is one of the biggest planting exercises and most significant revegetation efforts under way on the Sunshine Coast. Up to 120 students from schools in the area participated in the planting. As well as helping clean our air, this planting has the added benefit of restoring the natural habitat of an endangered bird, the cohen's fig-parrot. I believe that not that long ago people were denying its existence. We thought then that there were none left, but apparently there are a few dozen. We are working to retain the numbers that we have and, hopefully, increase those numbers.

On Wednesday, 5 March I was joined by the member for Noosa, Cate Molloy; the Minister for Public Works, Robert Swarten; and Henry O'Clery, the Technical Director of Greenfleet. I would like to commend the schoolchildren who came on the day. They put in a tremendous effort and were very well supported and encouraged by park rangers from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.

Our government puts its money where its mouth is. Along with what it did just outside of Boreen Point, the Beattie government has also added to the Noosa National Park, again to protect ground parrot habitat. The Beattie government acquired 303 hectares of habitat for the threatened ground parrot to add to the Noosa National Park. The state land at Coolum west of the existing national park had been transferred from control of the Department of State Development and will be added to the park. The land at Coolum contains wallum heath and will help the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service to further protect this unusual parrot.

This addition comes hot on the heels of the announcement in January that the state government had purchased two blocks totalling 400 hectares on the Sunshine Coast with the help of the Maroochy Shire Council to protect sensitive coastal land from future development. Part of these

parcels is very dear to my heart as it is located in my electorate of Kawana. That parcel of land abuts and now becomes part of the Mooloolah River National Park. Those two areas will make up a proposed new conservation park located along Coolum Creek and, as I say, are an addition to the Mooloolah River National Park.

Back in September 2001, the Beattie Labor government announced the addition of nearly 600 hectares to the Noosa, Mount Coolum and Triunia national parks. These included areas of high dune country at Marcus Beach, which were previously threatened by development, and large areas of wallum banksia and heath land near the Sunshine Coast airport. It would be remiss of me not to mention that when we announced the transfer of the state land at Coolum we were joined by the Premier; the Hon. Dean Wells, the Minister for Environment; the member for Glass House, Carolyn Male; and, of course, Cate Molloy, the member for Noosa. All of these additions of land are part of the government's vision for the future use of state owned land between the Maroochy and Noosa rivers and will help preserve the Sunshine Coast's natural values and assets.

The Beattie government has announced the addition of more than 95,000 hectares of parks and forests throughout Queensland. This government is showing its commitment to the environment and we are allocating funding to the acquisition of two properties, Lilyvale and the Archer Point-Green Hills aggregation, totalling almost 83,000 hectares, on the Cape York peninsula. We have also set aside a new 5,300 hectare conservation park and added 7,630 hectares to the existing state forest at Curtis Island off Gladstone. We have also extended the Beecher State Forest, which is south-west of Gladstone. We have set aside the Tenthill Conservation Park near Gatton and made a small addition to the Lark Quarry Conservation Park, which is near Longreach.

Also in coming months we will have acquired more than 20,000 hectares with state and Commonwealth funds including the future Nairana National Park north of Clermont and additions to Edmund Kennedy and Eubenangee Swamp national parks in north Queensland. The government also intends to add 350 hectares to the Poona National Park in the Great Sandy Region. Our parks and forests cover about 1.5 million hectares of the state and bring in more than 13 million visitors a year and much-needed income to local communities. It was sad to hear many members opposite speak as though land-holders and leaseholders have a God given right to clear the land. If they believe it is their God given right to bulldoze the trees and vegetation, is it their God given right to kill the natural fauna that exists in these areas?

In closing, this bill is evidence of the strength of the Beattie government's commitment to all Queenslanders and our commitment to the future of our vital mining and exploration industry, an industry that employs thousands of Queenslanders and contributes billions of dollars to our economy. The bill is also evidence of our commitment to our land's traditional owners and a recognition of their rights. It acknowledges our commitment to crack down on illegal clearing, to protect our environment and to secure the future of our natural resources. Ultimately, this bill is very good evidence of our commitment to all Queenslanders, to our economy, to our environment and to our way of life. I commend the minister and his department and commend the bill to the House.