



Speech by

**Hon. D. WELLS**

**MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA**

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Hansard 27 March 2003

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**National Parks Day**

**Hon. D. M. WELLS** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Environment) (10.07 a.m.): National Parks Day is celebrated in March each year to commemorate the establishment of Queensland's first national park at Witches Falls, Tamborine on 28 March 1908. This year we have good reason to celebrate. Twenty-two new rangers have just been appointed to work in national parks in south-east Queensland. This government's promise to appoint 140 new permanent rangers will be realised by the end of June, with the appointment of 60 new permanent rangers across the state.

This brings the number of permanent rangers in our parks to over 600. Queensland's park estate has grown to 7 million hectares, protecting deserts, Great Barrier Reef islands, rainforests, open forests and woodlands, grasslands, wetlands, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, and historic and archaeological sites.

National park facilities across the state are being improved through the \$37.7 million four-year Better Parks Program. This government is leading the way in sustainability through our national parks visitor facilities which are being provided at places across the state that focus on minimising waste and using energy efficiently and water sustainably. Our new Sustainable Parks Program is showcasing sustainable 21st century technology in conjunction with showcasing the green wonders of our national parks to show how we can live greenly and cleanly in the 21st century. These sustainable facilities are located at Cape York, western parks such as Currawinya and Culgoa, and coastal parks such as Fraser Island and Moreton Island.

This government is committed to caring for our parks. I commend to the House the work of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. It continues to build on the great tradition of managing national parks for conservation, a tradition established by our forebears almost 100 years ago.