



Speech by

**Hon. D. WELLS**

**MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA**

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Hansard 14 October 2003

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Conservation Agreements, Stamp Duty/Land Tax Refunds**

**Hon. D. M. WELLS** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Environment) (9.55 a.m.): People who preserve their land for the good of the environment deserve more than the satisfaction of knowing that future generations will enjoy their legacy. That is why the Queensland government is rewarding people who are prepared to set aside environmentally valuable land such as nature refuges. From 1 July 2003, local councils and private land-holders who enter into conservation agreements with the Environmental Protection Agency will be able to get a refund of any stamp duty or land tax payable. To qualify for a conservation agreement, the land will need to meet criteria specified by the EPA. For example, it may contain an ecosystem of significance, a rare or threatened plant species, or provide habitat for an endangered animal. The land-holder can approach the EPA to negotiate a conservation agreement over a part of, or all of, a property. The conditions within the agreement are negotiated between the parties. Ownership and management responsibility is retained by the land-holder. Once the conservation agreement is finalised, the government will reimburse the land-holder for the amount of transfer duty paid on the purchase of the land. Land tax will be reimbursed annually for the amount payable on the land.

There are nearly 100 nature refuges already gazetted and I would like to congratulate all those land-holders who have made the commitment to preserve the conservation values of their land through entering into conservation agreements. Nature refuges provide a formal way for both local councils and private land-holders to play a significant role in contributing to the conservation of our natural heritage. National parks alone will never be able to protect all of the plants, animals and ecosystems in this biodiverse state. These new arrangements will provide a further incentive to many more land-holders to commit to conservation agreements. This initiative is just one of the ways this government is supporting private land-holders and local governments in protecting and preserving our natural heritage and retaining green space, especially in south-east Queensland.