



Speech by

**Hon. D. WELLS**

**MEMBER FOR MURRUMBIDGE**

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Hansard 15 October 2003

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Wallum Heath Management Plan**

**Hon. D. M. WELLS** (Murrumbidgee—ALP) (Minister for Environment) (10.10 a.m.): Last month, in conjunction with Maroochy shire, I launched the Sunshine Coast Airport Wallum Heath Management Plan, which I table for the interest of honourable members. The management plan provides for rehabilitation of the heath, which will not only deter larger bird species but also provide habitat for specialised fauna, including the ground parrot, which is 'vulnerable' under the Nature Conservation Act 1992. It is interesting that the revegetation at Maroochy airport will actually make the airport safer. The non-natural vegetation that will be replaced is habitat for birds that can get in the way of planes and cause incidents. The natural wallum heath is home to the ground parrot which is entirely compatible with 21st century aeronautical technology. As a result Maroochy airport will become unique; the only ecosystem in the world where the birds are on the ground and primates are in the air.

Wallum heath is a low-growing coastal heath community adapted to sandy soils low in nutrients. It is diverse and rich in wild flowers and home to a wide variety of flora and fauna, several species of which are threatened. It is restricted to areas between Bundaberg and northern New South Wales. In south-east Queensland, wallum heath once extended over much of the Sunshine Coast, offshore islands and the Gold Coast. This government has reserved examples of wallum heath in its protected estate, for example, in Maroochy, Noosa and Emu Mountain National Parks.

Additions in 2001 as a result of the Noosa and Maroochy state land audit, increased the Mount Coolool National Park by approximately 300 hectares—

**Ms Molloy:** Hear, hear.

**Mr WELLS:**—I thank the honourable member for Noosa—and Noosa National Park by 280 hectares. The latter includes a section of high dune land along the western side of the David Low Way at Marcus Shores. The state government, through the Environment Protection Agency, is also collaborating with industry, local councils and land-holders to protect remnants on private land. The EPA and the Maroochy Shire Council have jointly purchased 75 hectares to become the Coolool Creek Conservation Park. Recent negotiations with the developers of Bundilla have resulted in the dedication of 25 hectares as conservation reserve.

The Sunshine Coast University is cooperating in relocating and salvaging wallum species on 15 hectares of former grazing land. The success of this work will be monitored and aligned to a teaching program. This government's commitment to protecting the wallum heath community is clearly demonstrated through these initiatives.