



Speech by

**Hon. D. WELLS**

**MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA**

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Hansard 30 October 2003

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Biodiversity; Coopers Puzzle**

**Hon. D. M. WELLS** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Environment) (10.06 a.m.): Queensland has a wealth of biodiversity. However, we still have much to learn about the natural processes that sustain it. One of the focus areas of sustaining our natural wealth is enhancing our understanding and knowledge of Queensland's biodiversity. Recently local residents Wendy and Bill Cooper from the Atherton Tableland discovered a small tree, *cupaniopsis cooperorum*, in the Wet Tropics. This tree was named after the Coopers and, as the Premier mentioned, is often referred to as Coopers Puzzle. This discovery demonstrates that Queensland still has biodiversity that is yet to be found and described.

This tree is found in the local area of the Wet Tropics of north-eastern Queensland. It is a fairly small tree that grows to seven metres high. It has glossy foliage and tiny cream coloured clustered flowers and bears orange-pink fruit with glossy black seeds. Coopers Puzzle is in a genus of at least 60 species. About 14 of these species occur in Australia. The other species are found in New Guinea and various islands in the western Pacific.

Today we are lucky enough to have been able to borrow this Coopers Puzzle from the Mt Coot-tha Botanical Gardens. The new plant will be on display from 12.15 on the Speakers Green and I invite members to come and view it. Coopers Puzzle is quite restricted in its occurrence, with a total distribution area of less than 100 square kilometres. It is known to occur in the Wooroonooran National Park.

The protection and conservation of our biological resources is particularly important considering that new species of plants and animals are still being found. Queensland's biological resources provide a rich basis upon which many industries are built. Through Smart State biotechnology initiatives, Queensland's biodiversity may one day unlock cures for global health problems such as cancer or diabetes. All sectors of the government and the community need to work together to protect and sustainably manage biodiversity for current and future generations.