



Speech by

Michael Choi

MEMBER FOR CAPALABA

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NATURE CONSERVATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr CHOI (Capalaba—ALP) (4.43 p.m.): I rise in support of the Nature Conservation Amendment Bill 2004. In doing so, I echo the sentiments expressed by the honourable members for Pumicestone and Redlands in congratulating the member for Logan, the Hon. John Mickel, on his elevation to the ministry. When Minister Mickel was a backbencher, he had two passions in life: the first was to look after the welfare of the Liberal Party, as we all heard, and the second was to look after the environment. I can still recall the time he spent with me drinking green tea and eating vegetarian sushi rolls talking about the importance of the environment to Queensland and how important it is to get a balance of development and the environment in the state of Queensland. I rest in the comfort of knowing that now the environment of Queensland is in very good hands, as I am sure that Minister Mickel will ensure the survival of species both in terms of the environment and also the Liberal Party.

The policy objective of this bill is to make the hierarchy of categories of protected wildlife in the Nature Conservation Act 1992 more consistent with those used by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the IUCN. I want to inform the House that the IUCN is a very unique union. Its members come from some 140 countries, including over 70 states, 100 government agencies and over 750-plus NGOs. More than 10,000 internationally recognised scientists and experts from more than 180 countries volunteer their services to assist global commissions. Its 1,000 staff members in offices around the world are working on some 500 projects at any one given time. One of the priorities which I admire of the IUCN is to build recognition of the many ways that the livelihood of the poor depends on the sustainable management of natural resources. Through its projects, the IUCN works to apply sound ecosystem management to demonstrate ways of providing sustainable livelihoods for those directly dependent on natural resources. The IUCN has been engaging and restoring ecosystems and regenerating people's lives, economies and societies all around the world.

These amendments to the Nature Conservation Act demonstrate that the Beattie Labor government is committed to nature conservation in this state, which was an election promise made in 1998. The changes proposed today will provide a consistent way of describing the degree of threats that our wildlife face. They are important not only because the categories are consistent with each other but because they are consistent with the way wildlife is categorised both at a Commonwealth and international level. It simply provides a better perspective on the true status of Queensland wildlife.

In my electorate of Capalaba, as I am sure it is in the case of many electorates, wildlife preservation is a significant issue. I want to take this opportunity to talk about a very significant wildlife conservation initiative by the Redland Shire Council in my electorate of Capalaba, the Redlands IndigiScapes Centre. The Redlands IndigiScapes Centre at Capalaba is a key educational and botanical facility for displaying and interpreting the Redlands' indigenous plant communities. It breaks new ground in displaying local native plants in suburban sized display gardens and encourages the use of plants in nursery production and gardening.

The Redland Shire Council launched the 14.5 hectare site of Australia's first environmental centre for indigenous plants in October 1999 and since then over \$1.5 million has been committed to the centre. The information centre and demonstration gardens were opened in February 2002. Displays, workshops

and events are regular features at the centre, and there are several kilometres of walking trails through bushland and suburban sized demonstrations. The botanical garden section of IndigiScapes features a coastal garden, a formal garden, a wildlife-attracting garden, a grey gum garden, a water-wise rainforest garden, a wetland garden, and a creek vegetation garden. Visitors, whether they are home gardeners or landscapers, can learn how to use local plants in their own clients' gardens. In turn, this will help the nursery and landscape industry to introduce local native plants into mainstream garden design. I also want to congratulate the staff of the Redlands IndigiScapes Centre for doing wonderful work in maintaining the flora and fauna of our electorate.

The issues of development and preserving the environment have been major ones for most of our electorates. As our population grows, we need to have access to land for social sustainable uses such as primary industries and housing. But on the other hand we must also balance that need against the need to preserve wildlife habitat. There is no easy solution and no easy answer. We need a well-informed approach to solve this problem. As I said before, I rest in the comfort of knowing that this ministry, headed by the Hon. John Mickel, will attempt to deliver a balanced solution to maintain growth as well as the nature conservation of our state. I commend this bill.