



Speech by

## Hon. Lindy Nelson-Carr

MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA

Hansard Tuesday, 13 March 2007

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### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

#### Great Walks

**Hon. LH NELSON-CARR** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism) (10.10 am): Our parks and forests attract an estimated 16 million visitors annually, making them one of the largest tourism attractions in the state. Our parks and forests help to generate economic prosperity while protecting our natural inheritance.

Since 2001 the Beattie government has invested \$16.5 million to establish a world-class system of Great Walks across Queensland. \$10 million was spent on the original six walks. Five of these—Fraser Island, Sunshine Coast hinterland, Wet Tropics, Mackay highlands and Whitsundays—are now complete and being enjoyed by the visiting public. The sixth, the Gold Coast Hinterland Great Walk, is also on track for completion by the end of the year. Half of the walk has already been established, and work is underway to install pre-cast stone-like steps in steep terrain between Binna Burra and Springbrook. Significant public consultation and impact assessment has also been undertaken to ensure this track is constructed and can be maintained in a sustainable way.

In late 2006 the Beattie government committed \$6.5 million for another four Great Walks—in Cooloola, the Conondale Range, Carnarvon and the Whitsunday islands. Working in consultation with Tourism Queensland, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service is currently developing concept plans for each of these walks.

The proposal for the Whitsunday walk is a new and exciting one, involving sailing or boating between several tropical islands, with a series of short walks to viewing spots from mooring points and campgrounds on the islands. The Carnarvon walk will link Mount Moffatt to the Carnarvon Gorge, allowing visitors to escape the crowds and experience these spectacular natural landscapes.

The Cooloola walk will link the tourism towns of Noosa and Rainbow Beach to the popular camping areas at Inskip Point and beyond to the existing Fraser Island Great Walk. The Conondale walk will include track options for walkers wanting a choice between relatively easy or more challenging, with highlights including magnificent rainforests and spectacular waterfalls. Our parks and forests are very special places, and the Beattie government's commitment to Great Walks will provide Queenslanders and visitors with many more opportunities to enjoy these natural wonders.