



Speech by

Hon. Lindy Nelson-Carr

MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA

Hansard Thursday, 19 April 2007

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Crocodile Management Plan

Hon. LH NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism) (10.14 am): Time is running out for people to make submissions on the review of the crocodile management plan. The review will set out guidelines for the management of crocodile populations for the next 10 years, taking into account the recent trend of increased sightings. Any changes to the management plan will have human safety as the priority.

There has been much debate in the north Queensland media about the recent increase in crocodile sightings. I want to reassure the community that QPWS rangers respond as quickly as possible to reported sightings in populated areas. If a crocodile is found to pose a risk, it is removed. However, this approach does not ensure the area is free from the reptiles, so education and responsible human behaviour is still very important.

Crocodiles will always be part of our natural environment, and we need to look at the best way to manage them while minimising the risk to human safety. A crocodile cull would not achieve this as recent research has shown them to be highly mobile creatures—and they do not carry with them any visas. A cull would only lull people into a false sense of security.

It is essential that people take warnings about crocodile sightings from rangers, surf-lifesavers and the media seriously. One suggestion in the review is a proposed fine for people who disobey the 'no swimming' signs in national parks. This proposal arises because some people insist on swimming in these known habitats at their own peril and ignoring pleas from rangers, and I have seen this with my own eyes. I also want to emphasise that it is not and never was intended to fine people launching their boats, as the final plan will make abundantly clear.

I reiterate the importance of people having their say on the draft plan before submissions close on 4 May. Copies of the plan can be found at www.epa.qld.gov.au.