



Speech by

## Hon. Lindy Nelson-Carr

MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA

Hansard Wednesday, 8 August 2007

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### APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL AND APPROPRIATION BILL: ESTIMATES COMMITTEE F

**Hon. LH NELSON-CARR** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism) (8.34 pm): I would like to begin by thanking members of Estimates Committee F, in particular the chair, who was called 'Miss Goody-Two-Shoes' tonight. I, as another member of parliament, find that really difficult to accept, too.

**Mrs Reilly:** It shows how little they know.

**Ms NELSON-CARR:** That is right. The member for Mudgeeraba did an excellent job and managed the committee process in a very professional and honourable manner. We all know that the estimates process is very important in ensuring that government is open and accountable.

I would also like to thank and congratulate all the staff from the EPA, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Multicultural Affairs Queensland for their time and dedication in preparing for estimates. I would like to particularly thank my ministerial staff. It would not have been possible without their tireless energy and commitment, and I am extremely grateful.

In the time that was available during the estimates hearing, I was able to reiterate some of the key achievements that highlight my portfolio. But over the past 12 months the government has continued to add to the state's parks in a major expansion of protected areas. I was very surprised to hear from the member for Burdekin about how little she understands the acquisition program, particularly when it comes to Springbrook. Springbrook is one of our smallest national parks but it has some of the highest diversity and needs to be protected at all costs.

**Mrs Reilly:** It is World Heritage listed.

**Ms NELSON-CARR:** It is World Heritage listed and we do not have any plans for any compulsory purchasing under this program. It is vital to keeping Queensland the beautiful, pristine place that it is today.

I would also like to acknowledge how pleasant it has been to work with the member for Noosa over the last 12 months in his representing his constituents, and I look forward to continuing to do that in the future. I know that the member is very proud of his electorate. Much of what he was saying tonight did not have great relevance to what he and I have been working on, but the member can rest assured that Noosa will not be destroyed by this government. In fact, we will be doing everything we can to maintain Noosa as the beautiful place that it is. We continue to demonstrate that our commitment to nature conservation is at a premium and it complements lands protected by our national parks. Queensland's Nature Refuge Program now has 252 nature refuges in place, which means that we are protecting more than half a million hectares of the state's natural heritage.

In multiculturalism, the Beattie government had reaffirmed its commitment with a total of \$700,000 in grants for 2006-07 for 83 festivals, projects and events throughout Queensland and we have committed the same amount for 2006-07.

The shadow minister's criticism and to a lesser extent the member for Hinchinbrook's criticism regarding pests and weeds and the extensive pest and weed management program is very disappointing. What they both fail to recognise is that protected area estates have grown, as the member for Hinchinbrook recognised, by about 15 per cent. That is over a million hectares and that has happened since the election of the Beattie government. However, what the member failed to recognise is that we are spending almost five times the amount that his government spent on pest and weed management when last in power.

In relation to the member's comments about crocodiles, all I can say is that I think his understanding is limited and he is ill-informed. The only reason we are seeing more crocodiles and are having more sightings is that development is at an unprecedented level. People are moving into Queensland increasingly. Development is taking over some of the habitat of these wonderful creatures. Therefore, we are going to see more of them. We do remove problem crocodiles. We do have education programs in place. I think that your comments are very ill-informed.

Getting back to pigs, we are always keen to work cooperatively with neighbours and landholders to manage pests and weeds across the state. We spent more than \$4.5 million over the 2006-07 year managing pests and weeds on the Queensland parks estate. No government in Queensland has ever committed that amount of money to tackle fire and pest control.

In relation to vehicles, the member for Burdekin continues to make mileage in the media about the EPA's use of V8 and V6 vehicles. She does know that the EPA has undertaken to modify its vehicle fleet to ensure that it is as economic and green as possible. We have an operational need for six-cylinder and four-cylinder four-wheel drives as they are the most suitable vehicles for driving in our national parks and park areas.

Time expired.