



Speech by

Rosemary Menkens

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

Hansard Thursday, 22 February 2007

REVOCATION OF STATE FOREST AREA

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—NPA) (6.10 pm): I support the motion for the revocation of 35.039 hectares of Beerwah State Forest—SF561—described as lot 300 on SP195863 and located directly adjacent to the southern boundary of Australia Zoo. This initial revocation is the first part of a total 130 hectares of the Beerwah forest to allow the further expansion of the Australia Zoo complex. The revocation of lot 300 will allow the first part of an expansion at Australia Zoo and cater for a rail station servicing Australia Zoo on the proposed Beerwah to Maroochydore railway as part of the South East Queensland Regional Plan. The area under consideration is forested with exotic pine trees and therefore has little to no conservation value.

During a briefing provided by the department on the eighth of this month it was explained that these trees will be logged prior to the handover to realise their commercial value. It was further explained that, in exchange for the eventual revocation of the total of approximately 130 hectares proposed, Australia Zoo will transfer a larger area of forest totalling some 200 hectares and directly adjacent to the Peachester State Forest. Australia Zoo will also make a further cash settlement to the state equal to the difference in value between the two areas. The proposed land swap is supported by Forestry Plantations Queensland and will have no adverse environmental impacts.

The staged revocation and land swap has been requested by Australia Zoo to finalise land deals prior to commencing negotiations for an Indigenous land use agreement for the remaining stages of the Australia Zoo expansion. I want to pass on my thanks to the minister for the briefing offered by her department and again indicate my support for this initiative that will allow one of the state's premier tourist attractions to achieve its true potential in recognition of and as testament to the vision, drive and passion of the late Steve Irwin.