



Speech by

Hon. Kate Jones

MEMBER FOR ASHGROVE

Hansard Tuesday, 15 September 2009

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Teague, Mr N; Natrass, Mr R

Hon. KJ JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability) (10.16 am): It is with great sadness that I address the House regarding the loss of one of our Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service rangers and to express my sincere condolences to his family. Ranger Neil Teague tragically died on duty in Coomingleh State Forest, near Monto, earlier this month in an area that was one of his favourite places, the Hurdle Gully scrub. Neil was ranger in charge of the Moonford management unit and was a ranger with the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service for 13 years. Although he managed a number of parks and forests, Neil particularly had a great love for Coomingleh. Neil was held in high regard by many in the community—and I know that the member for Callide also knew him well—and he was also admired and respected by his colleagues. I am told that most people who met Neil took an immediate liking to him as he was a true character.

Neil's reputation as a keen fisherman is legendary, but his love for the bush and his passion for the job of looking after the country that he managed will also be fondly remembered. Neil was greatly respected within the service not only for the depth and breadth of his knowledge but also for being a good ranger and a good person. His tragic death has been very strongly felt within the service and he will be greatly missed.

The loss of one of our rangers on duty brings home to us all what a challenging job our rangers have. Rangers help make Queensland the best place to live in, keeping our parks and forests enjoyable places for all of us to visit. I want to pay my respects to Neil, a true ambassador of what a Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service ranger is—a person committed to looking after our country, a caretaker of our natural environment, a respected member of his local community and a person extremely well regarded by his work mates. Like so many of our rangers, Neil was proud to wear the 'Herbie' badge on his shoulder, quietly confident that he was doing his bit and making a difference in protecting Queensland's unique environment.

I would also like to pay my respects to former ranger Ric Natrass, who passed away this month. Ric was with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service for more than 20 years up to 2004 and was a great conservationist and well known for his media work. His contribution to conservation was duly recognised by the Ipswich City Council through its declaration of the Ric Natrass Environmental Park at Bellbird Park in 2006. Ric's passing is also a sad loss for the Queensland conservation movement. I would like to express my condolences to his family.