



Speech by

Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Hansard Wednesday, 10 March 2010

MOTION: REVOCATION OF STATE FOREST AREAS

Mr POWELL (Glass House—LNP) (3.57 pm): It is also my pleasure to rise to speak in support of this motion before the House. In essence, the revocation concludes a process that began formally in 2006. Rather than reiterate the history of this land swap and revocation, I will acknowledge the worthy contributions of the shadow minister, the member for Caloundra, in whose electorate Australia Zoo now resides, and my predecessor, the now member for Pine Rivers. I also acknowledge the tireless and extraordinary management team at Australia Zoo. In this instance, I understand that it has diligently addressed their native title responsibilities for the 100-plus hectares that we are revoking today.

In my brief contribution I would like to focus on the key benefits that this revocation will bring to the people of Glass House and the broader Sunshine Coast hinterland. Firstly, this revocation will give Australia Zoo the certainty that it needs to implement Steve and Terri Irwin's dreams and aspirations for the site. I am very supportive of the zoo's intention to expand and include accommodation options and open-range safari experiences. I am supportive because of the immense flow-on benefits that it will have for individuals and communities in the electorate of Glass House. Not only will the expansion increase the worldwide fame and attractiveness of the zoo; the employment opportunities for locals will be expanded—locals who share the Irwins' passion for conservation, animal welfare and the environment.

More broadly, the expansion will mean that the likelihood of tourists spending more than one day at this award-winning tourist attraction will also increase. That, too, can only be a positive for the wider Glass House community as these tourists will look to supplement their visit to the zoo with other eco based tourism opportunities that are also developing along with the growth of the zoo. There are opportunities such as the now fully functioning Glass House Mountains Visitor Information Centre, hiking, eco lodges and other nature based experiences in the Glass House Mountains themselves and the neighbouring Blackall Range.

Domestic and international tourism is one of the economic bedrocks for Glass House. The flow-on effect of this revocation and the consequent development of Australia Zoo will further entrench and strengthen this base. It will increase the number of local jobs which in turn will deliver on the lifestyle we all love in the hinterland. The benefits go beyond economic development. There are environmental wins as well.

The former macadamia farm at Peachester involved in this land swap is incredibly strategic. It forms a natural link between the Glass House Mountains National Park, the Beerburrum West State Forest and the Peachester State Forest. I have mentioned previously in this House my support for strategic land purchases that deliver true nature corridors. I have outlined my beliefs that Glass House fills a very considered role in developing one contiguous corridor from the D'Aguilar National Park in the south to the Kondalilla Falls, Mapleton Falls and Conondale national parks in the north. The property at Peachester is one such strategic investment and I thank Australia Zoo for its foresight in identifying it and including it in this land swap.

In conclusion, I reiterate that this revocation will finalise a process that will deliver tangible and substantial economic and environmental outcomes for Australia Zoo itself, Glass House, the Sunshine Coast hinterland and Queensland. I commend it to the House.