



Speech by

**Andrew Powell**

**MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE**

Hansard Thursday, 5 August 2010

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## **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL AND APPROPRIATION BILL: ESTIMATES COMMITTEE G**

**Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (5.02 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate pertaining to Estimates Committee G, specifically as it relates to the portfolios of Climate Change and Sustainability and Tourism. Victories are rare when in opposition, sizeable victories even rarer. So I am glad I have this opportunity to speak of a victory for the people of Glass House.

In my maiden speech, now some 15 months ago, I first raised the idea of protecting more green space in the interurban corridor between Caboolture and Caloundra. I spoke of my commitment to protecting the natural beauty and the rich agricultural productivity of this stunning part of the world. In September last year, as we debated the then Sustainable Planning Bill, I spoke about getting the 'balance right between environmental, economic and social drivers' and the fact that Glass House could be a real test case as at present it clearly protected green space, viable agricultural land, economic productivity and community living.

In March this year, as we revoked a parcel of state forest reserve as part of a land swap with Australia Zoo, I mentioned how strategic was the former macadamia farm at Peachester being offered by Australia Zoo. I stated—

It forms a natural link between the Glass House Mountains National Park, the Beerburum West State Forest and the Peachester State Forest.

Little did I know, this land would subsequently be sold to Hancock as part of the fire sale of FPQ. But perhaps most telling were my comments during the budget debate on 10 June this year. I stated—

I do hope the electorate will benefit from increased investments in existing national park infrastructure and in the acquisition of more protected land. As I have said before, the Glass House electorate strategically connects the D'Aguiar National Park, the Glass House Mountains National Park and the national parks of the Blackall Range. Deliberate investment and acquisitions in this area could deliver an uninterrupted nature corridor stretching from Brisbane's northern suburbs to the Noosa hinterland. As I mentioned in passing to the Acting Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability yesterday, following the travesty that was the sale of Forestry Plantations Queensland ... such purchases would demonstrate a commitment by this government to maintain the green corridor that lies between Caboolture and Caloundra.

Even I did not realise how prophetic those words would be, as less than a fortnight later the Acting Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability announced a trebling in size of the Glass House Mountains National Park and the addition of a new 164-hectare Pumicestone National Park. The Glass House Mountains National Park has grown by 2,000 hectares. The cynic in me must point out that this figure of 2,000 hectares corresponds exactly to the amount of freehold land sold to Hancock in the same area.

The expansion means that 13 of the 14 iconic peaks are now protected, with Mount Beerburum, Mount Tibberoouccum and the Twins—east and west Tunbubudla—being added to their sisters and brothers. With the addition of the Pumicestone National Park, we now have an almost seamless green buffer stretching not only south to north but also west to east, from the Glass House Mountains to the Pumicestone Passage. This is a great outcome for Glass House. Working with locals, I have argued that protecting this corridor was a strategic and obvious investment in our community's future. I am overjoyed that the government has also now seen that.

I do have a number of questions for the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability. Will the increase in park size come with an increase in Queensland Parks and Wildlife rangers and staff? Will the increase in park size come with an increase in operational funding to provide park infrastructure, undertake maintenance and fire control and manage weeds and pests? Can the minister advise whether the increase in park size will see an increase in local police funding to monitor illegal use of the park, particularly by a small element of the trail bike riding community? If it does not, we have achieved nothing more than a weed strewn, pest-harboured fire danger that will do nothing to protect the 490 plant and animal species that call the area home.

While I am asking questions of the minister, will she also join me in lobbying her cabinet colleague the Minister for Tourism and her federal equivalent, the Minister for Environment Protection, Heritage and the Arts, to have the Glass House Mountains added to the National Landscapes list? Whilst I respect the claims of the Great Barrier Reef and Fraser Island, I do not believe they fulfil the National Landscapes criteria as completely as the Glass House Mountains.

The mountains are a landscape which capture the essence of Australia and offer distinctive natural and cultural experiences. They have a rich Indigenous history, a link to European settlement, starting with Cook's naming of them, and a modern Australian experience based around the tourism hall of fame Australia Zoo. In short, Minister, let us take our investment in local national parks one step further. Let us promote what we have protected to the world.