



Speech by

**Hon. Kate Jones**

**MEMBER FOR ASHGROVE**

Hansard Thursday, 25 November 2010

---

## MOTION

### Revocation of State Forest Areas

**Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability) (9.41 pm): I move—

- 1) That this House requests the Governor in Council to revoke by regulation under section 32 of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 the dedication of protected areas as set out in the Proposal tabled by me in the House today, viz

#### Description of area to be revoked

Mungkan Kandju National Park	Area described as lot 3 on plan AP20239 Lots 4 and 5 on plan AP20240 and containing an area of about 75,854 hectares as illustrated on the attached sketch.
Munburra Resources Reserve	Area described as lot 5 of plan CP893400 and containing an area of 6,730 hectares as illustrated on the attached sketch.

- 2) That Mr Speaker and the Clerk of the Parliament forward a copy of this resolution to the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability for submission to the Governor in Council.

**Ms JONES:** I will start my speech on the proposed revocation of part of Mungkan Kandju National Park. As members of parliament will recall, the Premier and I spoke about the sorry history of the Archer Bend section of this park when the motion was tabled on 6 October this year. The former Bjelke-Petersen government declared this area as a national park in 1977, thus preventing the acquisition of the Archer Bend pastoral holdings by Aboriginal interests, including the late John Koowarta and others.

The proposed revocation will address this historic injustice by providing for the return of a significant area to Aboriginal traditional owners as Aboriginal freehold land. The area to be revoked is the north-western corner of the park north of Archer River. It covers about 75,850 hectares, which is 44 per cent of the Archer Bend section and 17 per cent of the whole park. The key conservation values in the area will be protected through a nature refuge which will cover 43 per cent of the area revoked from the park. The government will provide financial and practical assistance to traditional owners for conservation management of this nature refuge.

This will also support training opportunities for local Indigenous people to develop the skills needed for ongoing management of their land and could potentially provide a career path to jobs in natural resource management and with the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. For example, one of the Lama Lama traditional owners has assumed a significant management role, effectively as ranger in charge in the Coen district.

The return of this area as Aboriginal freehold will provide opportunities for the Wik Mungkan people to manage the cultural and natural values of the land. It will allow them to establish living places and business enterprises on their traditional lands. Traditional owners and the government have negotiated

that 83 per cent or about 380,000 hectares of Mungkan Kandju National Park will remain a national park due to its high conservation values and many popular sites for visitors.

That means the park will continue to protect the Archer and Coen rivers corridor and associated wetlands and wildlife. The park will in future be jointly managed by the state and the traditional owners. This will provide for continuing conservation of the natural and cultural values of the area and for visitor access to the many camp sites in the park. The conversion of most of the Mungkan Kandju National Park to a jointly managed national park and the revocation of a return of part of that land to traditional owners is a significant outcome of the government's Cape York Peninsula Tenure Resolution Program.

I take this opportunity to thank the staff of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, including Buzz Symonds who is here tonight, for the great work that they have done in working with the traditional owners to make this an historic outcome. I also thank a number of other key players who have made this possible—of course the Wik Mungkan people, the Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation, the Cape York Land Council, the Australian Conservation Foundation and the Wilderness Society. I thank them for their constructive negotiations during this time. Through this tenure resolution program the government has transferred more than 600,000 hectares of Aboriginal and freehold land and declared more than 570,000 hectares as national parks managed jointly and cooperatively with Aboriginal traditional owners.

I must also point out that what is being put forward before the House tonight would never have been possible under a conservative government. It was conservative politics that was responsible for this shameful chapter in Queensland's Indigenous history. It was a travesty of justice and a corrupt use of government power motivated solely by a spiteful determination to deny the rights of the Wik Mungkan people.

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Ms JONES:** I take the interjection that this is what Queensland was like before I was born. I am very pleased to say that that is not the Queensland that I live in today and it is not the Queensland that my child was born into.

I hope the measures we are taking today go some way to easing the genuine hurt that many Indigenous people felt in 1977 and help repair the years of sour relationships that followed due to the attitudes of the conservatives towards Indigenous land rights.

I will now address the proposed revocation of the Munburra Resources Reserve—another outcome of the Cape York Tenure Resolution Program. This reserve covers 6,730 hectares and lies about 60 kilometres northwest of Cooktown. It was previously part of the Starcke Pastoral Holdings.

The Queensland government bought the Starcke Pastoral Holdings in 1994 for conservation of natural and cultural resources and the return of homelands to traditional owners. About two-thirds of the property was then included in national parks and about one-third was granted as Aboriginal freehold land. A small section was dedicated as the Munburra Resources Reserve in 1995 to allow mining exploration to take place. The government intended that after 15 years the resource reserve would be revoked, except for any granted mining leases, and the revoked area would be granted as Aboriginal land.

As 15 years have elapsed it is now proposed that the whole resource reserve be revoked. The revocation of the resource reserve and the grant of the area as Aboriginal freehold land will finalise the tenure resolution of this area as agreed in 1994. I commend the motion to the House.