



Speech by

Mark Ryan

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

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KOALA PROTECTION

Mr RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (11.53 am): I rise to give my support to recent positive news that this state Labor government will introduce new conservation measures to protect koalas in priority koala bushland habitats. Koala populations in South-East Queensland, and particularly in the Morayfield state electorate, have been declining for a number of years and these progressive announcements will mean that this vulnerable species will be further protected. The new package of measures will protect priority koala habitat, rehabilitate habitat impacted by development and create new habitat for future koala populations.

The conservation measures include: a ban on all habitat-clearing development in priority areas until new planning instruments are finalised; an initial amount of \$15 million for buying new habitat and rehabilitating existing habitat; compulsory acquisition powers for koala habitat outside the urban footprint; new planning laws for councils to minimise koala impacts when assessing development applications in key koala areas; new controls for councils to ban dogs in new developments in koala habitat; and new planning laws to allow land swaps in and outside the urban footprint for strategic koala habitat corridors. I also note that this state government is making \$400,000 in state funding available to researchers to study chlamydia and other serious koala diseases. It is hoped that this funded research will help find ways to reduce the impact of disease on koala populations in Queensland.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the hard work of the Moreton Bay Koala Rescue group. I commend the group's volunteers for their selfless and dedicated service to the protection and care of koalas in the Morayfield state electorate. When it comes to the protection of koala populations, governments can do something or nothing. In this instance, this state Labor government is doing something. In this instance, this state Labor government is working hard to provide the greatest protection of koalas ever seen in South-East Queensland. It is this Labor government which is leading policy development on environmental protection in Queensland.