




Speech by

Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

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NATIONAL PARKS; WILDLIFE PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (11.33 am): Last week the LNP released three elements of its 'can do' approach to the environment. The first was the LNP's commitment to ensuring that our national parks are properly managed and available to be enjoyed by all Queenslanders. As I have said before, one of Queensland's most precious assets is its natural beauty, best portrayed through our protected estate. But like everything else, Labor has been trashing it. For the sake of Greens party preferences those opposite lock up our national parks and throw away the key. They say it is for conservation, but one does not need to be a rocket scientist to know that this approach is having a disastrous effect.

Our national parks are full of pests and weeds. There are not enough rangers on the ground to manage them and those rangers are not even equipped with the necessary management plans to do so. What is more, by locking out the general population, Queenslanders become more and more disengaged from the environment they need to explore, appreciate and protect. While other jurisdictions are realising the health and environmental benefits of linking individuals and communities with their natural environment, this government is doing everything it can to distance everyday Queenslanders from their natural surrounds. That will change under an LNP government. The LNP will make national park management a priority, concentrating on our biodiversity, weed and pest management. The LNP will focus on ensuring that our national parks are also good neighbours so that adjacent landholders are not invaded by pests and weeds taking refuge in the parks. The LNP will deliver and implement a state-wide streamlined permit system for sustainable tourism and recreational enjoyment of Queensland's public land. The LNP will properly manage our national parks for all Queenslanders to enjoy their outstanding natural heritage now and into the future.

The LNP will also get serious about wildlife protection and preservation. That is why last Thursday in Hervey Bay I committed an LNP government to a full independent scientific review of the Fraser Island dingo management strategy. The LNP recognises the Fraser Island dingo as an integral part of the distinctive ecology that makes the Fraser Island World Heritage area unique. There are two very clear, very divergent approaches to dingo management. One purports a survival of the fittest mentality—that is, if it is nature's way the dingo will survive; if not, they will not. The other school of thought is more humane: an approach that would see more human-dingo interaction to ensure the population does survive. A strategy that is too insular, that is not challenged by opposing schools of thought, that is not open to broader scientific debate could spell disaster for this iconic species. That is not something that the LNP is willing to accept. Therefore, an LNP government will commission an immediate independent, scientific peer review of the Fraser Island dingo management strategy. The LNP is committed to ensuring the long-term survival of a healthy, sustainable wild population of dingoes on Fraser Island while ensuring that the island once again fulfils its potential as a premier tourist destination.

Continuing in the vein of getting serious about protecting and preserving Queensland's natural icons, last week I also announced the LNP's policy when it comes to dugongs and turtles. An LNP government will act to protect Queensland's iconic dugong and turtle populations, which is more than can be said about this tired Bligh Labor government. The LNP recognises that there is an entitlement of traditional owners to hunt dugongs and sea turtles for non-commercial use under the Native Title

(Queensland) Act 1993. But the LNP will not allow unnecessary cruelty and torture of these wonderful species. An LNP government will remove the current exemption under the Animal Care and Protection Act for traditional hunters. Like other jurisdictions, this will make it illegal for anyone to mutilate, torture or unnecessarily prolong the death of an animal. The LNP will also work with Indigenous stakeholders to protect Queensland's dugong and turtle populations from poachers and stop brutality against these iconic species. Some Indigenous communities have already self-imposed moratoriums or regulated hunting practices by issuing permits and licences. An LNP government will work with Indigenous communities to see this successful and proactive model rolled out across all dugong and turtle habitats. An LNP government will enforce the law when it comes to the illegal trade in dugong and turtle meat products. These policies are in stark contrast to Labor's failed and flawed environmental record. These policies are LNP can-do action. This is part of our plan to get Queensland back on track.