



Speech by


Hon. Kate Jones

MEMBER FOR ASHGROVE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

National Parks

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Resource Management) (10.06 am): The Queensland government is committed to protecting wildlife and conservation right across Queensland including here in the Mackay and Whitsunday regions. Today I can announce that we have created a new national park west of Bowen and we are expanding two existing national parks in the Mackay and Bowen regions. They total more than 1,500 hectares of new national park for Queensland and for Queenslanders.

The outstanding natural features of the new 1,300 hectare Mount Abbot National Park ensure that this unique area was afforded the highest level of protection by the Queensland government. The Mount Abbot National Park will protect rare montane heath vegetation including five species of plants that are unique to the park as well as fauna. This includes—

Mr Lucas interjected.

Ms JONES: Better than that. This includes the protection of the vulnerable striped-tail delma, also known as the legless lizard. The Mount Abbot National Park will also protect a number of new and rare insect species—and we have not seen any of them around here!—including the Notozomus tailless whip scorpion and the wingless beetle. As a national park (scientific), this new national park also presents a significant opportunity for researchers to study this unique biodiversity.

The good news does not end there. Moving north-west, we also have added 70 hectares of land to the Mount Aberdeen National Park to expand the koala corridor between Bowen and Collinsville. Mount Aberdeen National Park is also home to the black ironbox eucalyptus, the common death adder and the northern quoll.

Locals of the region have also long appreciated the beauty of the Cape Hillsborough National Park. That is why we have expanded it to a total of 1,100 hectares to ensure the natural values and recreational opportunities are protected. I encourage all Queenslanders to come and enjoy the world-class national park which is right on Mackay's doorstep. Again, I am sure the local member, the member for Whitsunday and Minister for Tourism, will welcome this expansion and what it provides as a drawcard to this region. These expansions and our new national park show just how committed the Bligh government is to protecting the biodiversity of the Mackay and Whitsunday region.