




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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**NATURE CONSERVATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT
BILL (NO. 2)**

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (4.36 pm): I rise today to support the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2013. Firstly, I would like to thank the Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing, the Hon. Steve Dickson, for bringing this bill so promptly before the House. I would also like to thank the Health and Community Services Committee, chaired by Mr Trevor Ruthenberg, member for Kallangur, for its input in reviewing this bill. I note that the committee recommended that this legislation be passed. It is important that I rise to speak to this bill, particularly as one of the prime purposes of this bill is to achieve red-tape reduction and to streamline legislative processes.

Our can-do government had a commitment to open up national parks for the enjoyment of all Queenslanders. We are opening up these beautiful areas of Queensland not only for our locals—even they could not use and enjoy these wonderful spaces in some cases—but also for our local, interstate and national tourists. In my role as assistant minister for regulatory reform, I am always very pleased to see a minister bring a bill before the House which moves towards our target of reducing red tape. In fact, this bill delivers on our commitment to reduce red tape and ensure our national parks are effectively managed so that they are available for all Queenslanders and visitors to enjoy.

There are a few specifics that I would like to touch on. First is the reform of the tenure structure in our national parks. It is obvious that the current legislation is overly complex. It has resulted in uncertainty, whether from the park manager's perspective or the visiting public—if they are allowed to visit—as to the purpose of the different tenure classes and that has the potential to create impediments to the access of these lands. It is pleasing to see that we are not only reducing these tenures from 14 to seven—so halving the number of tenures—but also removing numerous duplications in the legislation that all sit around these tenure classes. Like so many other old rules and regulations that were set up by the previous government, there is also an opportunity to remove tenure classes that do not even get used. So there will be two main categories of protected area: a national park and a regional park. There will be a difference between the purpose of each of the future tenure classes and types of outcomes for which these areas are managed. As mentioned very clearly by other members of this House, in some case on numerous occasions during their time on their feet, there will be no mining, logging, hunting or open slather grazing in our national parks.

Irrespective of what those few who are opposite say, that is not the purpose of this bill. This bill will create a simpler planning framework for our park managers and make it easier to convey to the public what the different tenure classes actually mean.

An opposition member interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I hear a member opposite saying that this is a lie. Well, excuse me, this is not a lie! Secondly, this bill streamlines management planning and reduces the legislative

complexity of our national parks, protected areas and marine parks. The amendments will remove unnecessary and burdensome processes such as the requirement for two mandatory rounds of consultation on management plans. We are streamlining processes, and it is important for me to note that the purpose of this legislation is to enable the minister to better use the state's resources for all Queenslanders. Not only will this reduce cost, but these resource savings can then be injected back into our national parks so that they can be better utilised. We will deliver improved on-the-ground management, and quite simply this means more staff for many of the beautiful national parks across our state.

I would like to briefly touch on why this is so important. The better management of our national parks will clearly help all Queenslanders. If our national parks are better managed and the lantana cut down on the side of the roads, it stops the resource sucking from other areas such as emergency management. Our poor rural fires have to go and fight fires because the national parks under the previous Labor government had been left to rack and ruin for the past 20 years. The way that some of these national parks have been left is disgraceful, and I have some of them in my electorate. I am talking about places such as Bunya Mountains National Park, Queensland's second oldest national park; Crows Nest National Park; Ravensbourne National Park; Benarkan State Forest; Yarraman State Forest; and Jimna State Forest, where lantana grows the most. All of these are wonderful places for camping, bushwalking and escaping from it all, and they are so close to our larger regional centres that we can use them to draw people into our national parks and increase tourism and economic development for regions, particularly the electorate of Nanango. It is so important to bring bills such as this before the House to improve areas such as the wonderful Nanango electorate, and I cannot thank the minister enough for this bill. I have amazing national parks in my area which have been locked up.

Another element of this bill that I would just quickly like to touch on is that it will provide a more flexible management framework for our park managers. The bill also recognises the importance of the involvement of Indigenous people in the management of protected areas, of which there is a prime example in my electorate. The Bunya Mountains Murri Ranger and Elders Council project has led to a revival of the Indigenous presence and influence on the national and cultural landscapes of the beautiful Bunya Mountains after an absence of more than 100 years. This is a traditional gathering spot for all Indigenous people, who used to travel for miles and miles to get to the Bunya Mountains as a meeting spot. The Bunya Mountains Murri Rangers and Elders Council project was one of 88 finalists in the National Landcare Awards announced in Sydney in 2012 and it won the 2011 and 2012 national Leighton Holdings Indigenous Award. I can only encourage Indigenous groups such as this to help out with the management of the national parks, and I again congratulate the minister for a wonderful initiative.

In conclusion, of course the conservation of nature will always remain our primary objective while recognising that recreational, cultural and commercial outcomes are also important in determining how protected areas will be managed into the future. This is one area that we can only improve on, and this bill will improve tourism and resources in our wonderful state. We promised to deliver better infrastructure, and opening up our national parks is one of the ways that we can do this. I would encourage everyone who is listening in the House today to visit one of those wonderful national parks. The Jimna National Park has had an amazing upgrade to its toilets and camping facilities, so it will be a beautiful spot once that work is completed. I again thank the minister and his department for such a wonderful effort in reducing red tape and regulation in the state of Queensland to benefit all Queenslanders and also increase economic productivity in many areas within the state. I support this bill.