




Speech By  
**Hon. Dr Steven Miles**  
**MEMBER FOR MOUNT COOT-THA**

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## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **National Parks, Management**

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (10.08 am): I rise to outline the Palaszczuk government's commitment to proper funding for our national parks and protected areas. These areas safeguard Queensland's unique biodiversity, including much of our threatened flora and fauna species. This is the subject of much discussion amongst my colleagues from the Commonwealth and other states today at the Threatened Species Summit hosted by the federal environment minister and his Threatened Species Commissioner at the Melbourne Zoo. Unfortunately, I cannot be there due to today's parliamentary sitting.

The federal government and the other Australian states and territories are taking protected areas and threatened species management seriously. I wish I was able to say the same for the previous Queensland government. Upon commencing my responsibilities as minister, I quickly became aware of the funding shortfalls left by the previous government for managing our valuable protected area estate. Without an urgent funding bid to the Treasurer, the department of national parks would have been forced to let go of 15 Indigenous rangers who are playing a vital role in the continued management of Cape York's protected areas and are allowing these traditional owners to manage their traditional lands. Other funding shortfalls related to the management of land recently acquired for addition to the protected area estate. Acquiring land is the easy part; it is ongoing management that is the most important. Unless there is adequate funding, the conservation values that led the area to be protected in the first place will be undermined.

Rural neighbours, understandably, get frustrated by the lack of management. Farming weeds and fuelling wildfires, they call it. So I was shocked to discover that the previous government had not adequately funded the management of future protected areas. I am pleased to announce that in this week's budget the Palaszczuk government has stepped in and will resolve these funding anomalies by providing ongoing funding for the 15 existing and seven new Indigenous rangers on the cape and funding in the 2015-16 budget to manage newly acquired areas. Moving forward, the Palaszczuk government is committed to expanding our protected area estate towards the 17 per cent target set by the IUCN. Given Queensland has only eight per cent protected, including private land under nature refuges, there is a long way to go. However, I am interested to see how the government can work more closely with private enterprise and the not-for-profit sector to pool our conservation dollars and collaboratively and more efficiently deliver a strong, expanding protected area estate across Queensland that is well managed and resourced.