




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

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## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Protected Area Estate

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (10.27 am): Labor governments in Queensland have always been strong advocates for a robust, resilient and representative protected area estate. The Goss Labor government brought in the groundbreaking Nature Conservation Act in 1992, which introduced new classes of protected area estate and the land management principles required for each.

Currently, just under 7.7 per cent of the state is in a protected area under private and public conservation tenures and agreements. The Palaszczuk Labor government is continuing this great work and is committed to expanding our protected area estate towards the target set through the international Convention on Biological Diversity. However, finding the additional dollars needed to acquire and manage vast new tracts of public land for conservation is a great challenge. To meet this challenge, a more collaborative approach will be needed.

I have asked the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing and the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection to work together in consultation with relevant stakeholders and philanthropic conservation groups to develop a protected area policy that will consider innovative and cost-effective ways to improve the capacity for managing the existing and future national park estate, evaluate the most cost-effective balance of public-private involvement and enhance participation in and the effectiveness of private land conservation. There is no better example than the campaign currently underway by Bush Heritage Australia to attract funding to secure habitat and fund research for the recently rediscovered night parrot in far Western Queensland. The Palaszczuk Labor government is helping Bush Heritage achieve this with the night parrot habitat likely to become a protected nature refuge.

On this front, I am also pleased to advise the House that in early October I intend to propose the declaration of 11 new nature refuges. This will take the total area of high conservation value land in Queensland to over four million hectares. Agreement has also just been reached with the Australian government to declare more than 400,000 hectares of new protected area estate in Queensland. These properties purchased with contributions by both governments under the national reserve system program will initially be declared as a mixture of national park and regional park while some administrative impediments to the declarations are resolved. In addition, I have asked that priority be given to the conversion to national park of a further four properties totalling approximately 90,000 hectares in area, selected for their outstanding conservation values and their high resilience to the likely impact of climate change. Once these areas are declared as national park, the portion of Queensland that is protected area estate will be just under eight per cent. It is essential that we as a government and a society more broadly take prudent steps to ensure our unique flora and fauna is protected in a way that allows it to thrive and be appreciated by generations to come.