




Speech By
Bruce Saunders

MEMBER FOR MARYBOROUGH

Record of Proceedings, 10 May 2016

NATURE CONSERVATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (9.50 pm): I rise to support the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, and tonight I particularly want to focus on the amendments that are being made to the Aboriginal Land Act 1991. This act provides for the transfer of land to Aboriginal people. In 2007 amendments were made to the Aboriginal Land Act to facilitate the implementation of the Cape York Peninsula Tenure Resolution Program. The program includes converting national parks in the Cape York Peninsula region to another class of national park called national park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal land) which is jointly managed with Indigenous landholders. The Cape York Peninsula Tenure Resolution Program has the dual purpose of returning land to Aboriginal people and creating economic and employment opportunities while protecting important natural and cultural values and jointly managed national park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal land).

The legislative amendments that were made in 2007 resulted in the ability of the state to convert national parks to national park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal land) and transfer them to Aboriginal ownership. The proposed amendments will streamline the process to convert other types of protected areas such as regional parks to national park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal land) in the same way that the existing national parks are converted. This will result in the increased ability of Aboriginal people to own, access and manage their traditional lands. The funding support provided through the agreement with the state government will result in further employment opportunities for Aboriginal people on Cape York Peninsula.

An example of some of the positive outcomes which result from jointly managed national parks can be found in the Rinyirru (Lakefield) National Park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal land) which is located in the south-east area of Cape York and was transferred to the traditional owners in 2011. This park is 544,000 hectares in size and is owned by an Aboriginal land trust representing over eight clan groups and associated families. The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service employs 11 full-time rangers to manage the park, including five Indigenous rangers. There is sufficient revenue from camping fees and other park funding agreements to enable an additional four Indigenous rangers to be employed by the Aboriginal land trust continuously working 10-day shifts alongside Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service rangers from early May until December each year. This example shows how local jobs are created which provide training and skills in park management and activities such as visitor management, weed and feral animal control and fencing. I am told that to date over 100 new land management jobs have been created. I commend the bill to the House.