




Speech By  
**Glenn Butcher**

**MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE**

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**NATURE CONSERVATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (8.10 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. The conservation of nature in the state of Queensland is a goal that the entire committee supports and all are extremely proud of the national parks estate. Queensland has an extraordinary and unique natural legacy to protect for future generations. I wish to thank all the people who made submissions to the committee. I thank them for being part of the committee process to review and examine the bill as presented before the House. I further wish to thank the departmental staff who worked hard to ensure the committee had a thorough understanding of the detail of this bill. I applaud all members of the committee for their diligence, application and constructive approach to the review of this bill through the committee process.

Unfortunately, I was not on the committee during the hearings. I would like to pay special mention to the two previous chairs for the work in assisting with this report that was tabled. I would like to thank the former chairs of the committee, the member for Ipswich, Jen Howard, and the temporary chair and member for Logan, Linus Power, as well as the staff of the committee whose advice was invaluable in the preparation of the report that was tabled. I would like to acknowledge the government's response to the committee's recommendations which saw all recommendations accepted or amendments made to consider in detail to give effect to those changes.

Prior to the changes made by the previous LNP government, the object of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 was simply the conservation of nature. A range of additional purposes was added to the object of the act which has the potential to conflict with the primary purpose of this act. The Palaszczuk government intends to restore the conservation of nature as the primary objective of the Nature Conservation Act while continuing to recognise the involvement of Indigenous people in the management of protected areas in which they have an interest under Aboriginal tradition or island custom. Labor has made a commitment to ensure that the protected area estate is managed in accordance with the cardinal principle, which is to preserve and to protect natural conditions, cultural resources and values to their greatest possible extent.

The conservation of nature needs to be returned as the primary purpose of the Nature Conservation Act so that the purpose of the act is clear. The amendments will not impact on recreation, ecotourism or other commercial uses that are authorised in protected areas. The Nature Conservation Act and its subordinate legislation provide for a granting of leases, licences, permits or other authorities for recreation, ecotourism and other commercial uses, and these all remain unaffected by the changes to the object of the act. Transitional provisions in the bill remove any doubt and provide for the continuation of lawful existing uses. Proposals for any new ecotourism or other commercial uses will continue to be considered on a case-by-case basis and be subject to any existing assessment considerations.

The change to the object of the act supports the protection and maintenance of nature while allowing for its ecologically sustainable use. The establishment of environmentally responsible facilities on national parks is supported by this government. This government encourages sensible, low impact uses, and this is demonstrated through the recently released implementation framework for commercial ecotourism facilities on national parks.

The amendments in this bill were originally intended to address the Newman-Nicholls LNP changes by reinstating the conservation of nature as the sole object of the Nature Conservation Act. However, through the committee process, stakeholders raised concerns about the reference to the involvement of Indigenous people in the management of protected areas in which they have an interest under Aboriginal tradition or island custom being removed from the object of the act. While other matters being removed from the object are sufficiently provided for elsewhere in the Nature Conservation Act, concerns were raised through the committee about the impact this may have on joint management arrangements in place with Indigenous people. While there is no practical impact on joint management arrangements, this government has listened to the feedback received and will be moving amendments during consideration in detail to retain the reference to involving Indigenous people in the management of protected areas in the object of the act. This will continue to recognise the important link between the conservation of our protected areas and the historical and continuing role that Indigenous people have in managing these areas. I have kept my speech short. I commend the bill to the House.