



Speech By  
**Andrew Powell**


**MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE**

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Record of Proceedings, 11 May 2017

**MOTION**

**Revocation of State Forest Areas**

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (12.05 pm): I, too, rise in support of the revocation of this part of Beerwah State Forest. I think the minister would acknowledge that at times ministers for environment do have to come into this House and present, for very sensible and obvious reasons, revocations of parts of our protected estate. This is yet another example in a long line of such revocations and, pleasingly, is one that again continues to achieve bipartisan support. The part of Beerwah State Forest that is being revoked is in my neighbouring member for Caloundra's electorate, but it is on Roys Road which connects Steve Irwin Way with the Bruce Highway and services both the electorates of Caloundra and Glass House.

I want to pick up on the point made by the member for Bundaberg that this site actually has very little conservation value. The history of it is that it was the workshops, the nurseries and the administrative centre for what was Forestry Plantations Queensland when it was government owned and, subsequent to the sale by the then Anna Bligh Labor government, became part of Hancock's operations in the Beerburrum-Beerwah area. It is worth pointing out that contrary to the promises made by the Anna Bligh Labor government that the sale would not see a deleterious effect on employment opportunities in that part of the Sunshine Coast—with all due respect to the operations of Hancock, which continues to operate that forestry plantation—we have seen a lessening of employment opportunities in and around Beerwah, Glass House Mountains and Beerburrum. We have seen a contraction of some of the operations up towards the Maryborough-Gympie area and out towards Rainbow Beach, so there has been a significant negative impact on local employment opportunities in the area.

However, I do want to acknowledge that Hancock is a great neighbour of many of the constituents in the electorate of Glass House and is doing a fantastic job, particularly around addressing the illegal dumping issues that have been occurring in its part of the world as well as illegal four-wheel driving. It is quite accommodating and working with a number of four-wheel-driving clubs to allow them to use its plantation areas safely and responsibly while also continuing to work with the local police around illegal motorbike use and a number of other things.

This site has always had workshops and has always been fenced off from the surrounding forestry area. Again, with regard to the conservation value of the Beerwah State Forest, we are talking about a pine plantation. It is not native vegetation; it is literally a pine plantation, and a very important one at that for the products that it provides to South-East Queensland and beyond. It is very sensible for us to be considering this revocation given the ownership of the property is going to be transferred to the Sunshine Coast Regional Council to establish its southern depot in an area that is growing. Caloundra South has already started across the highway. Beerwah East has now been included in the draft SEQ Regional Plan using Roys Road as the southern boundary. The rail corridor around the towns of Elimbah, Beerburrum, Glass House Mountains, Beerwah, Landsborough and Mooloolah continues

to grow, as we would expect and want it to given the proximity to the railway line and the ability to get into the city in just over an hour—hopefully quicker once we get the duplication done. The site of this southern depot by the Sunshine Coast Regional Council makes a lot of sense.

With the work that the LNP governments, both state and federal, have been able to achieve at the Roys Road and Bells Creek Road interchange, we now have fast access via Roys Road to the east on to the Bruce Highway and further beyond or back down Roys Road to Steve Irwin Way and you can distribute across the length and breadth of division 1 and up into division 5 of the Sunshine Coast Council.

It is eminently sensible for this revocation to occur. It is eminently sensible that this area be transferred to the Sunshine Coast Council. I acknowledge that the council will also be supporting the ongoing siting of the Beerwah and District Rural Fire Brigade there. Again, although it is not in the electorate of Glass House, this brigade services Glass House and is one of more than 20 rural fire brigades that do so. In a week where we have been acknowledging our volunteers, I want to put on the record my sincere appreciation for all that our rural fire brigades do, not only in Beerwah and its district but also across the length and breadth of the Glass House electorate. I support the revocation.