




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

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MOTION: REVOCATION OF PROTECTED AREAS

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (8.25 pm): I support the revocation motion. Like other members speaking this evening, I know many of the areas where these small revocations will occur. As the environment minister said, for the most part it is a case of correcting boundary anomalies, creating better and safer roads or handing back land to its rightful custodians. When he says this, I acknowledge that the minister's decision to revoke some parkland is not made lightly. It is done for the benefit of the local people and communities. I am pleased to see that proposed revocations in the Jardine River Resources Reserve and the Jardine River National Park have the potential to return so much back to the traditional owners. This vast remote wilderness encompasses much of the catchment of the Jardine River. As the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Partnerships said, it is rich and replete in Aboriginal cultural heritage. Development has wiped out almost every pristine part of our environment and, with it, so much cultural heritage. So these revocations in particular are very welcome news.

The Millstream Falls National Park has the honour of being the first national park in North Queensland and lies within the traditional country of the Jirrbal Aboriginal people. As the environment minister said, the park has a rich World War II history. Camp sites were constructed for the battalions of the 7th and 9th divisions between 1943 and 1945. The camp sites were built to hold almost 1,000 men each and were mostly tent accommodation and cooking, latrine and washing facilities. A network of rock-lined granite paths and roads linked the facilities and are still visible on the World War II heritage walk today. Correcting an historical error and at the same time returning four hectares of land to the Millstream Falls National Park is a win-win.

I was also pleased to see the small proposed revocation for Wooroonooran National Park. This park is one of the Wet Tropics world heritage area series of national parks and is a gazetted world heritage site. Given the numbers of visitors and tourists who visit this place each year, it is critical we offer a high-quality visitor experience.

I support wholeheartedly the proposed revocation to ensure the transport department can realign the Gillies Range Road Reserve, install drains, and make it better and safer for motorists. We are so lucky to have several beautiful national parks in the electorate of Keppel including the Keppel Bay Islands National Park, and I acknowledge the traditional owners, the Woppaburra people, who I was so proud to host in this place earlier this year.

Secluded beaches, crystal clear waters, plunging cliffs and diverse plant communities are some of the attractions of Keppel Bay Islands National Park. Access to the Shoalwater Bay Regional Park, which is 18 kilometres south-south-east of Stanage Bay, is only by boat. Chipps Hut and MacDonald Point camping areas provide beautiful beachside camping with ocean breezes. There is the Mount Etna Caves National Park, approximately 25 kilometres north of Rockhampton, which boasts limestone outcrops, decorated caves, rare bats and dry rainforest patches which are now protected in a national park that was once the site of Australia's longest running conservation battle.

Another one of my personal favourites is Byfield National Park, a conservation park and state forest. Outstanding coastal scenery, massive sand dunes, rugged pinnacles and remote camping opportunities are highlights of a visit to Byfield National Park and Byfield Conservation Park. Picturesque recreation areas surrounded by rainforest edged creeks, rugged mountains, pine plantations and ancient cycads are highlights of a visit to Byfield State Forest. My husband and I love taking our chocolate labrador Apollo camping at Red Rock in the Byfield State Forest. It is a beautiful little spot which has recently been upgraded thanks to \$300,000 from the Palaszczuk government. I inspected the works recently and the place looked fantastic, ready and awaiting visitors from the day after I visited. All work has been completed by local contractors and includes new roads, camp sites, fire pits and toilets.

I make special mention of the local park rangers and park workers who contributed to upgrades in our local national parks. There is also the Capricorn Coast National Park at Kemp Hill. Coastal volcanic headlands with intriguing rock formations, scenic lookouts and a variety of short walks through the diverse plant communities along the coast are highlights of a visit to the Capricorn Coast National Park. The walk up to Bluff Point is a favourite for locals and tourists alike. One can walk up to Turtle Lookout and often throughout the year one can spot turtles in the ocean. The Palaszczuk government is spending \$275,000 on upgrades to Kemp Hill, including an upgrade of the car park which was recently completed and to which I took the minister to inspect recently. A relocation and refurbishment of the toilet block will be under way shortly.

I cannot forget the infamous Mount Archer National Park which I spoke proudly about in my first speech in this place. Mount Archer has spectacular views of Rockhampton city on one side and out to the Capricorn coast on the other, deeply incised valleys, dry rainforests, fleeting glimpses of forest inhabitants and feasting cockatoos. The Palaszczuk government is investing half a million dollars into upgrading the walking trails at Mount Archer National Park. This is a place that locals and tourists alike love to visit and it is also the place for the annual Challenge the Mountain Festival whereby walkers, runners and cyclists climb the mountain in a bid to become the king or queen of the mountain.

Of course there is the infamous Mount Jim Crow National Park which is an impressive trachyte plug from a long extinct volcano with dry rainforest on the lower slopes and emergent hoop pines at the summit. There is no record as to why this volcanic plug was named Mount Jim Crow and, in fact, the native title holders and traditional owners, the Darumbal people, believed it was named after the US segregation. I had always assumed Jim Crow was some surveyor or explorer whom the iconic plug had been named after. The Department of Natural Resources and Mines confirms that there is no record whatsoever as to how Jim Crow was named. However, there is a possibility that the name was used by the US military when they were camped nearby on Artillery Road during World War II.

Mount Jim Crow is a place of significant cultural heritage for the Darumbal people. The Dreamtime story elders have told me about Mount Jim Crow and the adjacent Mount Wheeler—which I think should also be renamed back to its traditional name—was that they were two star-crossed lovers, but the Rainbow Serpent deemed them too close in blood lines to marry so they were banned from being together. The two refused the Rainbow Serpent's order and their secret was discovered so punishment was ordered. They sentenced the two to life as mountains, far enough away from each other that they can see but cannot touch.

I think the fact that Mount Jim Crow, a place of significant cultural heritage to our traditional owners, by its name refers to racism and segregation is a great shame. As a community representative I am ashamed that we have an iconic local place which is named after racism and segregation. I want a community that celebrates our Indigenous cultural heritage, our diversity and promotes inclusivity. I believe it is important to rename Mount Jim Crow to its traditional name, Baga, in the spirit of reconciliation. I want our local Indigenous community to be proud of this iconic, natural place and national park as opposed to being constantly reminded about a horrible racist and archaic policy of segregation. I would also love to see Mount Wheeler renamed to its traditional name, Gaiee.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are the two longest ongoing cultures in the world. Renaming official places, which were named after colonisation, back to their traditional names, which have existed for tens of thousands of years is, in my opinion, the right thing to do and a step in the right direction towards reconciliation. I urge all members to support the motion before the House.