



Speech By  
**Craig Crawford**


**MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER**

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**PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

**Raine Island, Green Sea Turtles**

 **Mr CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (2.33 pm): The Queensland government is currently engaged in a serious rescue mission in Far North Queensland. It is a rescue mission for thousands of green sea turtles. Every year up to 60,000 green sea turtles make their way to Raine Island, which is 620 kilometres north of Cairns, an area the size of a couple of football fields, to lay their eggs in the sand dunes. But the dunes have shifted over the years to cause a situation where tens of thousands of turtles lay eggs in the sand only to leave their young fall foul to flooding, drowning and a certain death. Mankind needed to intervene.

This is an area where the footprint of mankind is very limited, where tourists do not visit, where biosecurity is paramount and where generally only staff from the department of parks and wildlife and university researchers ever visit. But right now on Raine Island there are trucks, excavators and workers in high-visibility vests. We will move 15,000 cubic metres of sand—enough sand to fill six Olympic sized swimming pools—from the front of the beach to the back of the beach which is lower, reshaping an area 200 metres by 150 metres of prime turtle-nesting beach. By reshaping the beach and raising the sand height, we are lifting the nesting beach above tidal levels to prevent the drowning deaths of thousands of baby turtles still in their eggs. This rescue mission follows a successful sand reprofiling trial in 2014 which led to increased hatching success rates and nests staying above tidal levels for three nesting seasons in a row.

The work will include installing up to 600 metres of turtle exclusion fencing on the small cliffs to reduce adult turtle deaths. This will stop turtles who get up onto the small cliffs from falling down on their backs and dying of heat exhaustion. Turtles fall off these cliffs due to a particular rock edge and they end up on their backs. When they are on their backs they are unable to right themselves. Unfortunately, they lay in the blazing sun and within just a couple of hours they die a very cruel and unwarranted death—and one that has even attracted the attention of Sir David Attenborough. The department's staff have informed me that it is regular for them from their observation post to head down the stairs and flip turtles back over every day to right them and keep them alive.

The latest stage of the Raine Island recovery project will save thousands of green sea turtles which are listed as threatened which are a beautiful passive animal which can be found all throughout the Great Barrier Reef. These latest works will take another couple of weeks and be finished by mid-September. I congratulate the department and I congratulate JCU for being involved.