



Speech By  
**Hon. Leeanne Enoch**


**MEMBER FOR ALGESTER**

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**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Fraser Island**

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts) (9.56 am): K'gari, otherwise known as Fraser Island, is one of the most pristine locations Queensland has to offer. It gives me great pleasure to update the House on the international World Heritage Day celebrations held there recently, as well as my announcement of the 22 new Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger positions to be funded by the Palaszczuk government.

I can report that 7 December last year marked the 25th anniversary of K'gari's inscription on the World Heritage List—a truly significant achievement. K'gari was listed as a World Heritage area for its ancient sand dunes, forests and freshwater lakes, and its exceptional natural beauty, which traditional owners have been caretakers of for thousands of generations. Its listing meant that K'gari was now in the same league as the Great Wall of China, Machu Picchu, the Galapagos Islands and the pyramids of Giza.

On 18 April, I joined the Butchulla people, K'gari's traditional owners, conservation advocates and community members to mark the anniversary. We also celebrated the achievements of those who fought to protect K'gari's natural and cultural values—from the first declaration of national park areas on the island in 1971; the cessation of mining in the 1970s and logging in 1991; and the recognition of the Butchulla people's unbroken connection to country with their native title determination in 2014. I was also very pleased to announce that the Butchulla Aboriginal Corporation was one of seven Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to successfully secure funding for 22 new ranger positions under the expanded Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger program.

In the 2017-18 budget, the Palaszczuk government announced an additional \$8 million over four years to increase the number of land and sea rangers working on country. This program delivers multiple benefits for first nations communities. These include contributing to Closing the Gap targets in addition to the protection of some of Queensland's most significant ecosystems and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage. Land and sea ranger teams carry out a range of activities including habitat restoration, feral animal and weed control, species conservation, fire management and community engagement. This includes delivery of the very successful junior ranger program, which has been demonstrated to positively contribute to school attendance.

These new positions are in addition to the existing 76 rangers currently employed across 17 communities in North, Central, West and South-East Queensland. The Queensland government benefits from these partnerships with first nations people who have cared for their country for thousands of generations, and it is exciting to see these partnerships expanding across the state.