




Speech By
Cynthia Lui

MEMBER FOR COOK

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NATURE CONSERVATION (SPECIAL WILDLIFE RESERVES) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (12.26 pm): I rise to support the Nature Conservation (Special Wildlife Reserves) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. In doing so, I would like to address any concerns that traditional owners may have. The core objective of the bill is to establish a new class of voluntary privately managed protected area that will provide national park level protections for private land containing significant ecological or cultural value. The government recognises the significant contribution of private landholders in the protection of Queensland's expansive and rich biodiversity, and this bill will allow for the protection of those values in perpetuity.

During the committee's consideration of the bill concerns were raised by Cape York Land Council that special wildlife reserves may impact on native title rights, Indigenous land use agreements and economic opportunities for Aboriginal people in Cape York. I would like to make it clear that the declaration or subsequent management of a special wildlife reserve cannot impact on native title rights and interests unless consent is provided.

The existing Nature Conservation Act 1992 preserves native title interests during the declaration or dedication of a protected area other than to the extent that the native title interest holder is bound by a conservation agreement in relation to the area. Further, conservation agreements for special wildlife reserves will contain terms that will ensure that no obligations or restrictions are placed on native title parties which would interfere with the exercise or enjoyment of their native title rights. Native title parties will always be notified and consulted on any special wildlife reserve proposal.

In order to address the specific concerns of the Cape York Land Council regarding Indigenous land use agreements, as the minister stated earlier, amendments will be proposed during consideration in detail to address the relationship between the establishment of a special wildlife reserve and Indigenous land use agreements in the Cape York Peninsula region. This amendment requires that, where native title has not been extinguished in the Cape York Peninsula region, the minister will only enter into a conservation agreement for a special wildlife reserve if an Indigenous land use agreement allowing for the reserve exists. This will ensure clarity in the relationship between the arrangements and management requirements of the special wildlife reserve and the Indigenous land use agreement.

There are organisations and individuals out there in our community that invest significant amounts of time, money and energy into conservation works for the benefit of our environment for all Queenslanders. In my electorate alone there are 51 nature refuges covering an area of over 1.6 million hectares partnering with the Queensland government to provide conservation outcomes. For example, there is the Oikola Aboriginal Corporation which is protecting significant conservation values, including mound springs, threatened species and plant communities, of over 48,000 hectares of Aboriginal freehold land on the Oikola Nature Refuge.

Another example that many of you may be aware of is the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve Nature Refuge, which protects almost 126,000 hectares of diverse ecosystems, important wetlands, threatened species and even Gondwanic fossil sites in Cape York. Commitments of this nature are not just made

by organisations. One of the earliest individual commitments to nature refuges in Queensland is the Artemis Antbed Nature Refuge which, among other species, protects the endangered golden-shouldered parrot. There are also nature conservancies and philanthropic organisations such as Bush Heritage Australia, the Australian Wildlife Conservancy and South Endeavour Trust that have made significant financial investments in conservation in Queensland.

They wish to invest much, much more into land conservation, land management and ecotourism ventures, but the security of this investment is of significant concern. They do not wish to invest in these properties only to have to compete with incompatible land uses. This bill will ensure that these conservation significant properties will be protected. The bill will ensure that these organisations continue to feel confident in investing in Queensland, and this will flow through to our local regional communities. We expect that, as a result of the increased investment in conservation which is generated, there will be greater opportunities for our local people with jobs in various fields, including land management activities and nature based tourism.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the minister for all of her hard work and efforts in bringing this bill together. I would also like to acknowledge the committee secretary and assistant secretary as well as my colleagues, the committee chair and committee members. It has been a pleasure to work with everyone across the board to have a positive outcome for the betterment of everyone.