




Speech By  
**Kim Richards**

**MEMBER FOR REDLANDS**

---

Record of Proceedings, 27 March 2019

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

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (12.41 pm): I rise to make a short contribution in support of the Nature Conservation (Special Wildlife Reserves) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Queensland is renowned for its unique environment. We are a global hot spot for biodiversity. That is what we are well known for. Our natural places and our unique species are recognised globally for their importance. Biodiversity is central to our Queensland identity, wellbeing and lifestyle. It also underpins our prosperity. Queensland has world-class national parks. This legislation builds on our ability to protect and conserve important land.

The bill makes amendments to the Nature Conservation Act, Land Act, Land Title Act, Environmental Offsets Act, Environmental Protection Act, Biodiscovery Act, Forestry Act and Vegetation Management Act. The introduction of this legislation will create a new class of voluntary, privately managed protected area that will provide a similar level of statutory protection to that afforded to state managed national parks. The new class of protected area will apply to both freehold and leasehold tenures.

The bill will establish management principles for special wildlife reserves. These principles will provide a framework to guide management of special wildlife reserves by the landholder. A legally binding perpetual conservation management agreement and an associated management program will be negotiated for each special wildlife reserve. I think it is really important that we tailor each piece of land to its unique context. The conservation agreement and management program will detail management outcomes and actions to ensure long-lasting protection of each reserve's conservation values in order to achieve the management principles.

This mechanism will encourage private investment in Queensland's protected area estate—it builds upon our unique assets and environment that deliver for our Queensland economy—with the knowledge that this investment will be offered protection from incompatible land uses, such as mining and timber harvesting, that is not currently available in Queensland or elsewhere in Australia.

Establishing this special wildlife reserve mechanism will allow for protection of areas of exceptional conservation value on privately owned land and will be a significant incentive for private investment in Queensland's protected areas. This will be achieved by providing a high level of private land protection and ensuring that investments in conservation will not be compromised by incompatible land uses. This will create a level of investment confidence on private land that is not available elsewhere in Australia. When coupled with the state's extraordinary biodiversity values, the bill will serve to make Queensland a priority area for private investment in protected areas.

Protected areas are the most significant and visible means by which the people of Queensland seek to ensure the continued safeguarding of our internationally recognised and iconic biological diversity. In recent decades, the Queensland community has made an enormous contribution to the protection of our biodiversity through the creation of nature refuges, a class of private protected area. We now have 504 refuges covering almost 4½ million hectares.

Nature refuges are managed to conserve their significant natural and cultural values. Unlike special wildlife reserves, they allow for the continuation of a range of other sustainable land uses. Many nature refuges contain significant species and ecosystems that are not found in national parks or other state owned protected areas. While the contribution of nature refuges and their landholders to our protected area estate is unquestionable, some areas of our unique landscape are deserving of and require a level of protection that recognises their exceptional natural and cultural values. This bill seeks to fill this gap in Queensland's protected area framework by providing a mechanism to deliver a high level of protection for areas of private land that have outstanding conservation values. Essentially, this bill allows for the protection of any area based on its inherent values and future conservation management, not on its ownership by the state.

The bill is not overly controversial. It creates a new class of protected area. It provides clarity and streamlines land title registration processes. It provides for better regulation of activities that may harm our iconic Great Barrier Reef. It allows the government to consistently regulate transshipping in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. It also improves the flexibility of environmental offset approval processes. I commend this bill to the House.