



Speech By  
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**MEMBER FOR THEODORE**

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

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (2.45 pm): I, too, rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Nature Conservation (Special Wildlife Reserves) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. As a new member of the Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee, the inquiry on this bill was before my time. After speaking to the deputy chair to get some insight from him and on reading the committee report, I share the concerns of my colleagues when it comes to this legislation and the wideranging impacts it will have on many communities throughout the state, including in my area of the Gold Coast. My electorate spans Helensvale in a suburban setting to places like Maudsland, which becomes more and more rural the further out you go, and Guanaba, which is quite a rural area at the foothills of the Gold Coast hinterland right beside Mount Tamborine.

This legislation, as I said, has wideranging impacts. It amends a number of bills such as the Nature Conservation Act 1992, the Land Act 1994, the Land Title Act 1994, the Environmental Offsets Act 2014, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Biodiscovery Act 2004, the Forestry Act 1959 and the Vegetation Management Act 1999. Putting this into perspective for my constituents in my electorate of Theodore, which is at the foothills of the Gold Coast hinterland, we have multiple conservation areas that are run by the Gold Coast City Council, we have some state forest areas, plus we border national parks. What greatly concerns me about this legislation is the lack of clarity about the special wildlife reserves and how they will be managed through government policy in the respect that multiple conservation areas within my electorate lack maintenance. We have lantana and elephant grass growing wild throughout the region.

We all talk about the environment. We all talk about sustainability. We all talk about waterways and protecting the quality of water. These conservation areas need to be properly managed. As an example, we have elephant grass along the Coomera River. A lot of it comes from upstream from government owned land—in this case, the Canungra Army base. If it is not properly managed, using this example of elephant grass, when we get a flood event, the elephant grass clumps together and rips away from the banks. Then it washes downstream and repopulates itself further downstream. It also increases the soil levels and nutrient content in the water, and that is something we are all very fearful of especially when it comes to our reef—or, in my case, Moreton Bay—in terms of the quality of water coming down the river.

To bring that into line with another aspect, recently during the summer period my electorate was subjected to multiple bushfires. One of my local rural fire brigade officers told me that one of the biggest problems we have is the proper management of some of these conservation areas. These conservation areas tend to have a build-up of fuel over many years. When we get a hot summer, a dry period, an electrical strike from a storm, an accidental ignition of fire or arson, this has detrimental impacts on not just that local conservation area, which we should all be trying to protect, but also on other properties

throughout the district. It potentially puts residential properties and people's farmhouses at risk. We need to manage these properties. We need to ensure that feral species—feral weeds, feral pigs, feral dogs et cetera—are managed properly. I cannot see anything in this bill that will do this.

My constituents talk about mass development. I just distributed a letter to my residents about development in their neck of the woods and asking them what they would like to see in the more rural sector. People in South-East Queensland see development for housing—clear-felled lots where everything is cleared because people need somewhere to live. They think the same thing is happening in more rural areas when it is not true. It needs to be explained to the people of South-East Queensland that having farmers properly managing their properties is one of the best things for our environment. These special wildlife reserves could potentially become infested with weeds such as fireweed. Fireweed will blow across onto producing lands. The cattle do not like to eat fireweed because it is quite toxic for them. I have seen vast areas of the Gold Coast hinterland completely covered in this stuff. That is because we are not managing these properties. Therefore, what hope and what faith do we have if we start locking all these other properties up in perpetuity? The government is not going to properly manage it. It will wreak havoc for our rural properties that border them.

This legislation is not good legislation. As Bill Potts alluded to, it is bad legislation. This legislation needs to be thrown out and redrafted with something that is genuine for the environment and will be genuinely managing people's properties. Do not disadvantage our rural and productive lands in this state. When it comes down to it, they are the people who feed us. We need farmers. As the saying goes, everybody needs a farmer. When we introduce legislation in this House we need to make sure that it is for the betterment of all Queenslanders, and this is not.