




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR HILL

Record of Proceedings, 13 May 2021

MOTION

Revocation of Protected Areas

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (4.11 pm): I rise in enthusiastic support of the motion for the revocation of the protected area called Warrina Conservation Park. This area covers 0.9376 hectares described as lot 1 and is situated in Innisfail in my electorate of Hill. The revocation process was started initially in late 2018, when the proposed \$20 million expansion of the Warrina aged-care centre had stalled because the expansion required the use of a portion of state land adjoining the property. At the time, negotiations were stalled between Warrina and the department of environment and heritage protection. The expansion had been parked and was not progressing as the facility did not have the funds or assets to acquire the land from the state government. The proposed expansion to the facility is self-funded so there was no state or federal funding provided. However, I was approached to lobby the government to secure the land for the much needed expansion to continue.

My electorate of Hill has an ageing population, and existing facilities are at breaking point. Without the expansion, the government's own hospitals and care facilities in the region would have been stretched to breaking point. The Warrina aged-care facility is a not-for-profit community based aged-care facility which employs over 250 people, making it one of Innisfail's largest employees. It is a registered charity and provides world-class care and services to the ageing Cassowary Coast population. I want to thank the previous minister for the environment, the Hon. Leanne Enoch, for taking the time to hear my argument and agreeing to the revocation. I also thank the minister's staff. I also want to thank the present Minister for the Environment for the role that she has played to meet the needs for the expansion and the needs of this community.

In light of the issues facing aged care in this country, this is a good news story which has been driven by the community and the Warrina CEO, Peter Roberts, and supported by the Cassowary Coast Regional Council. With this revocation, the expansion will finally commence. The construction will employ in excess of 200 tradespeople, which is equivalent to 68 full-time jobs. The majority of the works will be completed by local contractors, which is estimated to account for 80 per cent of the total contract. The expansion will include the construction of a two-storey, 64-bed high-care unit, a complete new kitchen, an extension to the current laundry facility and updated car parking. Again, I should note that the entire expansion is to be funded by the organisation. The expansion will no doubt improve the quality of life for the elderly in this region and will provide security and peace of mind for not only our valued elders but also their families. I fully support this motion and I look forward to the expansion now going full steam ahead.