




Speech By
Aaron Harper

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

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MOTION

Revocation and Dedication of Protected Areas

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (2.59 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion before the House today—in particular, the national park revocation components. Before I do, I want to address some points that the member for Bonney, the shadow minister, has raised. He made personal attacks, as usual, on the minister. I thought that comment that the member for Bonney made about feral animals was interesting. They cut so many staff under the Newman government.

I spoke to National Parks and Wildlife staff in Townsville. They could not keep up with feral animals that the member for Bonney referred to because they had lost most of their staff under the Newman government. The member for Bonney talked about targets. They do not have a target—they do not have an emissions target and they do not have a climate target. They have no target. They need to follow the Labor government's lead.

The proposals focus on balancing necessary societal interests with significant public benefit with respect to preservation of Queensland's protected area values. The proposals are a demonstration of good governance over Queensland's protected area estate and each action has been given careful consideration towards the conservation values and rich culture contained within the estate.

The first proposal to revoke part of Castle Tower National Park is to allow for the area to be dedicated as freehold tenure and transferred to the Gladstone Area Water Board for public water storage purposes. I recently spent a bit of time in Gladstone—a fantastic part of the world. The work they are doing there is outstanding.

The proposed revocation contains an area of about 189 hectares and will accommodate the raising of Lake Awoonga Dam wall to the maximum inundation level. It will also provide long-term water security storage to industrial and commercial customers, including the good residents of the Gladstone region. The proposed revenue includes the maximum modelled inundation extent and reduces the need for further national park revocations for the dam.

The Gladstone Area Water Board has agreed to provide the Department of Environment and Science with a suitable land area as compensation for the loss of national park area. In 2002, the Awoonga Dam wall was raised from 30 metres to 40 metres in height to provide the region with better water storage security and the economic benefits that stem from that. Since then, the Gladstone Area Water Board has proposed raising the dam wall to 45 metres to provide more water storage to help droughtproof the region.

As the minister stated, the Castle Tower National Park revocation proposal includes about 729 hectares of compensation land. The compensation block, immediately adjacent to the national park, contains more than nine different native woodland regional ecosystems with habitat suitable for endangered species—endangered species such as LNP members!—such as the powerful owl and koala.

Mr Nicholls: Not up in Townsville—12.2 per cent swing.

Mr HARPER: It is like going fishing. It is so easy. I have got one on the hook—it is a big one.

Mr Nicholls: If you were any good at fishing, that would be a problem.

Mr HARPER: Around 80 per cent of this block has statewide biodiversity significance. I thought this was going to be an interesting speech. I can make it very interesting, member for Clayfield.

The Awoonga Dam catchment contains a number of protected areas and state forests that boost the integrity of its ecosystems—the waterways, the soil, the vegetation and the air quality—key parts of what makes the region's outdoors such an attraction to the community. The important Castle Tower National Park and Bulburin National Park are fairly rugged and can be challenging to access, while places like the popular Lake Awoonga Recreation Area, managed by the Gladstone Area Water Board, with its caravan park, walking trails and barbecue areas provide ample opportunity to get away from it all. We are happy to support the Gladstone Area Water Board in maintaining and building on this key infrastructure into the future. I give a shout-out to the member for Gladstone, Glenn Butcher. I recently spent time in Gladstone. The whole community and Mayor Matt Burnett should be incredibly proud of the work that they are doing around that area.

The proposal to revoke Mount Coolool National Park is considered the most appropriate solution for reducing additional flood risks to the neighbouring suburb of Marcoola resulting from the Sunshine Coast Airport expansion project. The revocation is expected to have very limited impacts upon the protected area estate as upgrades to the bund wall would occur in the existing footprint, which is already disturbed.

The revocation is necessary to support the Sunshine Coast Airport expansion project that provides significant public benefit for the region. The airport expansion has introduced significant job opportunities to the region, enhances avenues for exports and also has the potential to attract two million passengers annually, in turn, creating enormous tourism opportunities for the Sunshine Coast and surrounds.

I want to go back to the member for Bonney—he has left now.

Mrs McMahon: He is just not in his seat.

Mr HARPER: Thank you for that. I want to talk about their lack of targets on everything—climate and emissions. It is the Labor government that is setting targets. The LNP has no target, has no plan and has no idea for the people of Queensland when it comes to climate and climate control. They had a proud history of not only sacking all of those people in the national parks area under their watch but also having the highest land clearing. I do not know how they can be proud of that when we consider what is going on around the world. With that, I conclude my contribution. I commend the motion to the House.