




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR PUMICESTONE

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MOTION

Revocation and Dedication of Protected Areas and State Forest Areas (Cognate Debate)

 **Ms KING** (Pumicestone—ALP) (12.07 pm): I rise to speak in support of the state forest revocation proposals before the House today. Queenslanders love public transport. They hate road congestion. In particular, the proposals relating to the Beerburrum East State Forest and Beerburrum West State Forest go to back in public transport and, as the member for Glass House mentioned, rail freight and ultimately help alleviate at least some of the road congestion that we see day after day on the Bruce Highway. I know that those measures together are something the people of the Pumicestone electorate will support wholeheartedly.

As a former environment adviser once upon a time, in a previous life, I know that we spend a lot of time in this House considering revocations. I know that for people in our electorates the idea of revoking national parks can be a bit alarming. What we see over and over again is that this government—and no doubt previous governments—takes revocations of national parks really seriously. They are carefully considered and carefully worked through. Compensation and/or offsets are provided. Certainly, compensation is part of the package that goes to the Beerburrum West and Beerburrum East state forest revocations.

We see everything from small revocations to allow for holes the size of a mango to be drilled to small revocations to allow for additional drainage, to revocations to allow for access roads. They are always done to the most limited extent possible and are carefully considered and are a part of necessary works to achieve bigger and more important outcomes in the scheme of things.

Specifically I wish to speak to the Beerburrum East and Beerburrum West State Forest revocations that we are looking at today. They are beautiful state forest areas that contain exotic pine plantations and some open eucalypt forest. I had reason to head into the area last weekend when I was returning from our Labor Party state conference to avoid very significant congestion on the Bruce Highway. We all welcome additional public transport resourcing that will help alleviate the traffic congestion that people in our Moreton Bay communities deal with day after day. They are very scenic and beautiful areas—I congratulate the member for Glass House on just how attractive they are—at the foothills of the Glass House Mountains.

As I said our government does not take revocations lightly. They are necessary as part of stage 1 of the Beerburrum to Nambour rail upgrade—a major rail project that will deliver on our government's commitment to providing a sustainable transport system with all of the associated environmental benefits that come from getting people off our highways and getting freight off semitrailers and on to rail. Just over 10 hectares of Beerburrum East State Forest will need to be revoked for rail purposes and just under 20 hectares of Beerburrum West State Forest will be revoked for those same rail purposes.

This project is transformational. It is a \$550.8 million upgrade. It will improve the reliability, safety and capacity of the rail line and associated infrastructure. It will have far-reaching benefits for communities from the Sunshine Coast all the way up to Cairns and communities in northern Moreton Bay, including my area of Pumicestone. Ultimately, the Beerburrum to Nambour rail upgrade will significantly improve commuter and freight transport connectivity between the Sunshine Coast and Brisbane. As I noted, it will help relieve congestion pressures on the Bruce Highway.

Currently, the Beerburrum to Nambour section of the north coast rail line is a 39-kilometre single track rail line that has passing loops. That part of the north coast line is one of only a few remaining sections of single track in Australia that carry commuter, long-distance and freight trains. This upgrade is much needed. The project will deliver a track duplication between Beerburrum and Landsborough. It will reduce commuter travel times and allow for increased passenger and freight services to the growing Sunshine Coast region and support the remainder of the track to Far North Queensland.

Stage 1, as the member for Glass House noted, will also include a one-kilometre realignment of Steve Irwin Way. That work is underway now in sections that have not required revocation. Nobody likes to see our protected area estates require revocation, but I am confident that these revocations are going to serve a really important community and commuter purpose into the future. It will duplicate and strengthen the rail corridor. That is something that is very welcome to all of our communities north of Brisbane.

As we know and as recognised in our Connecting SEQ 2031 integrated transport strategy, rail is the most efficient people mover. It is also a very efficient freight mover, particularly in light of the infrastructure pathway toward the 2032 Olympic Games. These kinds of major investments and major infrastructure upgrades are more important than ever. Our government is working and will keep working to deliver public transport upgrades that guarantee Queensland's economic prosperity, sustainability and quality of life for all of us into the future.

There are some other benefits that this project will deliver for communities in the northern Moreton Bay. In particular, upgrades to the Landsborough station car park facility will see an extra 300 car-parking spaces and expansion of the Nambour park-and-ride facility by around 50 parking spaces. Given the extent to which many residents of northern Moreton Bay and the southern Sunshine Coast are regular work commuters to Brisbane or the northern suburbs of Brisbane, we know that these infrastructure upgrades to support public transport infrastructure will make a really big difference to people's lives.

Additionally, the project is going to unlock at least 330 jobs. Our government has a laser sharp focus on delivering more and better jobs for Queenslanders. This important project will certainly help to deliver that, as well as being important to our local economy. In the northern Moreton Bay traditionally we have had higher unemployment than in some other parts of Queensland. It is wonderful to see this nation-building, state-building infrastructure on track to go ahead with all of the job benefits that that will bring.

I am confident that the modest revocations that are proposed will not negatively impact the economic, social and cultural values that are offered by the two state forests. They will not impact their recreational use which is very significant. They are very popular destinations for horse riders, walkers, trail bike riders and four-wheel drivers. I note that HQPlantations' interests in these state forests have been satisfied. The revocation proposals before the Legislative Assembly are practical, are sensible and will result in significant community benefits for the entirety of the northern Moreton Bay and Sunshine Coast regions and beyond as well as significant environmental benefits. I commend the motion to the House.