




Speech By
Hon. Meaghan Scanlon

MEMBER FOR GAVEN

Record of Proceedings, 25 May 2022

MOTION

Revocation and Dedication of Protected Areas

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs) (2.42 pm): I move—

1. That this House requests the Governor in Council to:
 - (a) revoke by regulation under section 30 of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 the setting apart and declaration of part of two state forests;
 - (b) dedicate by regulation under section 29 of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 the revoked area of the aforementioned state forest as additions to an existing national park; and
 - (c) revoke by regulation under section 32 of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 the dedication of part of two national parks,as set out in the proposal tabled by me in the House today, vis

Description of areas to be revoked

Ringtail State Forest	An area of about 376.9398 hectares described as lots 9, 10 and 12 on AP22503 and part of lot 5 on AP22503 (to be described as lots 1-3 on AP23653), to be dedicated as additions to Tewantin National Park, as illustrated on the attached sketch.
Yurol State Forest	An area of about 287.13 hectares described as lot 2 on AP22502 and part of lot 1 on AP22502 (to be described as lot 1 on AP23654), to be dedicated as additions to Tewantin National Park, as illustrated on the attached sketch.
Castle Tower National Park	An area of 189 hectares described as part of lot 167 on plan NPW817 (to be described as lot 2 on SP278327), as illustrated on the attached sketch.
Mount Coolum National Park	An area of 7.603 hectares described as part of lot 154 on plan NPW867 (to be described as lot 2 on SP278327), as illustrated on the attached sketch.

Description of area to be dedicated

Tewantin National Park	An area of about 664.0698 hectares described as lots 9, 10 and 12 on AP22503 and part of lot 5 on AP22503 (to be described as lots 1-3 on AP23653), lot 2 on AP22502 and part of lot 1 on AP22502 (to be described as lot 1 on AP23654), as illustrated on the attached sketch.
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2. That Mr Speaker and the Clerk of the Parliament forward a copy of this resolution to the Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs for submission to the Governor in Council.

Our protected area estate that currently occupies over 14 million hectares throughout Queensland conserves areas with significant environmental values and provides jobs and recreational opportunities to Queenslanders. The Palaszczuk government is committed to protecting these

environmental values and rich culture contained within our parks to preserve the recreational lifestyle Queenslanders and our visitors enjoy. This government continues to invest in the expansion of Queensland's protected area estate and during the past 18 months has acquired a number of properties including land at Mon Repos, Wild Duck Island and The Lakes which all focus on protecting unique and vulnerable ecosystems.

The Palaszczuk government has increased the protected area estate by over 1.12 million hectares since 2015. With responsibility over such an expansive estate, the Queensland government understands that sometimes there is a need to balance management of estate areas with essential land uses that provide significant benefit for the public. For each proposal to revoke part of the protected area estate, careful consideration is given to ensure that potential impacts to the estate are minimal and that compensation is satisfied by the proponent, in accordance with departmental policy. When compensation is recovered for revocation proposals, it is invested towards management and expansion to further grow the estate and protect its values for current and future generations. Two of the four revocation proposals being debated in the House today are, in practical terms, upgrades of state forest areas to national park status. The remaining two revocation proposals relate to areas of national park. These revocations have been carefully considered and are supported as they offer opportunities to provide essential services to the public. I will speak to these first.

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. 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 residents of the Gladstone region. The proposed revocation 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 sustainable land area as compensation for the loss of the national park area. The compensation land area, which is adjacent to Castle Tower National Park, is about 729 hectares. Due to its conservation values and connectivity, this land has been assessed by my department as being a suitable addition to the protected area estate, subject to the resolution of any dedication impediments. Consultation with relevant parties required to support the proposed revocation has been fulfilled by the Gladstone Area Water Board.

In addition to providing public water storage services to the community, the Gladstone Area Water Board also accommodates various recreational facilities at Lake Awoonga Dam for the public at no charge, including playgrounds, picnic shelters, amenities and campgrounds.

The second proposal is to revoke part of Mount Coolum National Park to allow for the Sunshine Coast Council to raise and upgrade the existing bund wall, infrastructure that significantly mitigates flood risks for the adjacent suburb of Marcoola. The proposed revocation contains an area of about 7.603 hectares for the bund wall upgrade and is required to offset flood risks increased by the Sunshine Coast Airport Expansion Project. The issue was identified through the approved environmental impact statement for the airport expansion project, and modelling suggests that raising the bund wall by up to 400 millimetres will be able to fully address the additional flood risks to neighbouring communities.

The bund wall upgrades are expected to have minimal impact upon the national park's values as the construction will be contained within the existing bund wall footprint which is already disturbed. Several alternative proposals for reducing the flood risk were considered and determined as not viable due to their potential impacts to the protected area estate.

The Department of Environment and Science has negotiated with the Sunshine Coast Council to determine an appropriate compensation package for the loss of the national park area in accordance with departmental policy. Consultation with relevant parties required to support the proposed revocation have also been fulfilled by Sunshine Coast Council.

The third and fourth proposals before the House today are for the revocation of about 376 hectares from Ringtail State Forest and about 287 hectares from Yurol State Forest to allow the areas to be dedicated as additions to the existing Tewantin National Park. This proposal is stage 2 of converting a total of about 2,400 hectares from Yurol and Ringtail state forests to protected area status to deliver biodiversity, conservation and recreational outcomes for the community. Members of the House may recall stage 1 of the Yurol and Ringtail Conservation Project from 2019, where an initial state forest area of about 357.39 hectares was revoked and upgraded to Tewantin National Park.

The project is being undertaken in a staged approach to accommodate current vegetation conditions and land use activities and will allow for the cessation of harvesting operations over a five-year period and restoration activities to begin immediately after each phase. The project is the first of

its kind in Queensland and demonstrates the government's continued commitment to a balanced outcome for conservation and public benefit, delivering significant regional environmental, social and economic benefits.

A \$3.5 million investment to retire the land from plantation forestry for conservation purposes has been jointly funded by the Department of Environment and Science, Noosa Shire Council and Noosa Parks Association. In addition, a further investment of up to \$4.5 million has been negotiated with Greenfleet Australia to rehabilitate and revegetate the former plantation areas with native vegetation, in partnership with the Kabi Kabi Peoples Aboriginal Corporation, to provide habitat for koalas and job opportunities for local First Nations people.

The carbon sequestered by the new native forest areas will be sold by Greenfleet Australia in its voluntary carbon market to offset carbon emissions. Greenfleet Australia will also provide training to the Kabi Kabi First Nations peoples to implement the revegetation and monitor the carbon abatement area. Not only does this proposal contribute to the Palaszczuk government's commitment to increase the protected area estate in Queensland; it also delivers on a commitment to working in partnership and reducing the impact of carbon emissions on the environment.

It is estimated that during the 30 years of the carbon abatement, over 680,000 tonnes of carbon will be abated as carbon dioxide is sequestered from the atmosphere in plants as they grow. Prior to the establishment of plantation forestry over these areas, the areas hosted many regional ecosystems that are now of endangered and of concern status. The addition of about 664 hectares to Tewantin National Park will allow for the restoration of these endangered and of concern regional ecosystems as needed, supporting a significant vegetation corridor containing essential habitat for numerous threatened species, including the wallum froglet, tusked frog, the glossy black-cockatoo and the iconic koala.

The koala is listed under the Queensland Nature Conservation Act 1992 as endangered across its range in Queensland. This is one of many conservation efforts the Palaszczuk government is investing in to protect our koalas, and will complement other conservation initiatives currently being undertaken across particularly South-East Queensland, including habitat restoration, threat abatement and habitat protection.

This collaboration between Noosa Shire Council and the Noosa Parks Association Inc., the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and HQPlantations demonstrates that the Palaszczuk government is committed to building partnerships and exploring innovative opportunities to achieve conservation outcomes for Queensland. The partnership model used for this project has the potential for broad uptake amongst local government, industry and rural enterprise sectors to implement habitat restoration and enhance protections on state lands.

The plantation licence over the areas of Yurol and Ringtail state forests has been surrendered and access to this area will be granted to Greenfleet Australia to undertake significant tree planting work. I understand that Noosa Shire Council is prepared to use its best endeavours to use ongoing funding from its environment levy to protect additional koala habitat in its council area. Noosa Parks Association Inc. will look at both funding and community-based project support with groups such as Noosa & District Landcare.

Ultimately, at the completion of the project, Tewantin National Park would become more than 5,500 hectares of national park area, connecting habitat across the Noosa landscape to Great Sandy National Park. These upgraded areas and existing Tewantin National Park are within a regional and state significant corridor that connects to the Mary River riparian bioregional corridor linking remnant tracts of vegetation and providing coast to inland connectivity. The protection of the remnant vegetation areas of these state forests and the restoration of pine plantation areas with native species will create an extensive koala corridor which will help safeguard the koala in the Sunshine Coast region.

The proposal will not extinguish or affect native title rights or interests in relation to the land. Indeed, it goes some way towards acknowledging the cultural and spiritual significance of the koala to First Nations peoples and builds upon the foundations we are laying to co-steward our protected area estate.

(Time expired)