



Speech By
Hon. Meaghan Scanlon

MEMBER FOR GAVEN

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Health and Environment Committee, Report

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs) (11.42 am): I rise to speak on the report of the Health and Environment Committee following the 2022-23 budget estimates process. It is always wonderful to have the opportunity to talk about our historic investment in the environment. Of course, we now have the largest investment in Queensland's history in growing our protected area estate—over \$262 million. We also have the largest investment ever in our Recycling and Jobs Fund, which is a \$2.1 billion waste package—

Mr Butcher interjected.

Ms SCANLON:—more than \$40 million for koalas and threatened species as well as our Containers for Change scheme—I take the interjection from the member—and a significant investment in climate action, both for the community and internal capacity within the Department of Environment and Science and of course continued investment to protect our reef and to turn Queensland research into Queensland jobs.

I want to address some of the comments made by the Liberal National Party throughout this debate, in particular the comments made by the member for Bonney in relation to diversion targets for municipal solid waste. It was an interesting point made by the member for Bonney because it was the Liberal National Party that opposed the waste levy. They turned Queensland into the dumping ground of the nation. I do not know whether he did not realise, but at the end of last year we announced a 10-year plan that was backed in by LGAQ and CoMSEQ. Even Adrian Schinnerer backed in the reforms that they clearly missed and that was underpinned, again, by a \$2.1 billion waste package.

Not only did we do that; we provided up-front payments to councils to make sure they had confidence—so \$672 million was provided directly to councils to ensure there was no impact on households. To be clear, this is the largest investment in Queensland's history in recycling and jobs because we know how many jobs we can create in this industry. It was also a particularly interesting line from the member for Bonney given that the Leader of the Opposition in his budget reply speech actually backed in this investment. Either he is going off script or he is intentionally undermining the Leader of the Opposition.

I turn now to the protected area funding which, as I said, is the biggest investment we have ever made. It is three times what the Liberal National Party committed to at the election, so they have some nerve criticising this investment. Because they could not talk about the expansion given our significant investment, they then pivoted to management. Again, I think it is important to put on the record that we have increased management funding for our Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service to \$368 million. That is a 37 per cent increase compared to what it was under the Liberal National Party. I will stand up any day of the week on our investment in national parks compared to those opposite.

When it comes to koalas—apparently the member for Bonney has some new-found passion for koalas, which is interesting given his track record—not only are we investing in national parks, which protect critical habitat, but we also have funding for the Land Restoration Fund. They still cannot seem to get their head around how that fund works. We also put in place vegetation management laws that protect critical habitat which those opposite voted against. In fact, they actually referred to koala protections in a previous government as ‘mindless green tape’. Frankly, they have absolutely nothing to stand on when it comes to the protection of koalas. We brought in the strongest koala protections in Queensland history which prohibit and regulate development in large areas of South-East Queensland. We are very proud of our \$24 million investment which will continue to do restoration work in South-East Queensland in particular.

In relation to our operational Department of Environment and Science commitment to make the department net zero by 2030, I welcome the fact that the Liberal National Party is happy about this. It is a shame, though, that they do not actually have their own commitment, but of course I will take praise when it comes. In fact, we are very proud in this budget to have money to increase the capacity of our climate team. I think it is important to put on the record again that the Office of Climate Change was completely axed by those opposite. While we accept the science and we support the internal capacity in departments to make sure we make informed decisions, time and time again those opposite have gutted those Public Service jobs and then pretended they care about the environment. I think it is pretty clear that they do not have any interest in science or young people or the environment when you look at their statement of reservation, because it says they want to cut the section, they want to cut—

Ms Grace: Those young people care more than those opposite.

Ms SCANLON: Exactly. Young people care significantly more about the environment and science than the Liberal National Party. They want to cut the section in estimates that talks about science and youth because they had no questions to ask.

(Time expired)