




Speech By
Sandy Bolton

MEMBER FOR NOOSA

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MOTION

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

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (11.36 am): I rise to speak in support of the revocation of national park that was previously forestry land known as lot 1 on AP19201. As the minister outlined, these revocations are not done lightly nor without very good reasons. In this situation, it is land that has been cleared for many years, hosting buildings including the previous workshop for QPWS as well as an old rangers hut. Over the last decade these buildings have been made available for the benefit of the Pomona community. The existing workshop has hosted the Pomona Men's Shed since 2014. These guys are a fabulous group and organisation that deliver really great outcomes on multiple fronts, including in mental wellbeing, and the group continues to outgrow its confines through popularity. The rangers hut formerly housed the Noosa Integrated Socio-Economic and Environmental Research group, NISER, and when the permit to occupy ran out it was not renewed by the organisation. This has left this building hotly contested by various groups as their needs are tangible.

Since the former forestry lot became national park it had caused considerable concern and frustration for members due to the lack of tenure and inability to secure a lease due to legislation regarding national parks. This uncertainty had impacted their capacity to meet the demand to provide dedicated support to our community. As QPWS outlined at the time, it is in the business of conservation, not managing community organisations. This journey of four years to give the Men's Shed security of tenure and the capacity to expand has now been realised and I thank Minister Scanlon and previously Minister Enoch for their work on this but also QPWS and the Department of Environment and Science for their support. It is greatly appreciated by the Pomona community.

Turning to the rangers hut, which is still in limbo, I ask on the community's behalf that the demolition order remain inactivated and a decision be made as to which entity the lease is to go to. This building has both historical as well as tangible relevance to Pomona and a number of organisations, including the Pomona Men's Shed, which had submitted for tenure when NISER relinquished its lease some three years ago, yet it still sits idle. When there is such a great need, this increases the community's frustration.

The preservation and expansion of our national parks is important for our electorate. The process of the transition from forestry to national parks in order to achieve the best outcomes for both the increase and protection of our national parks is vital. I continue to seek funding for maintenance of our peri-urban parks. This is really important because as the risk assessments are done on fire and weeds within those peri-urban areas, it is much greater than a remote national park. I want to again thank the minister and officers from the departments, as well as the men of the Pomona Men's Shed and their wives and partners who have worked so diligently—as well as patiently—for so many years for this to be finally resolved. I look forward to celebrating with them.