




Speech By
Ali King

MEMBER FOR PUMICESTONE

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MOTION

Revocation and Dedication of Protected Areas

 **Ms KING** (Pumicestone—ALP) (5.49 pm): What a pleasure it always is to follow the member for Bonney in these debates. It is always enjoyable to see him finally off the leash, allowed to talk about his single LNP approved topic. He is over there laughing because he knows perfectly well he is not allowed to talk about climate change, about emissions, about land clearing in any genuine way or about koalas as that would upset the property sector. It is great to see him off the leash and able to lay in on our protected area estate. The work that we on the Health and Environment Committee do looking at changes to Queensland's protected area estate and management of Queensland's protected area estate is an important part of our work. It is something that I take seriously and I value the opportunity to be part of.

Our protected area estate in Queensland, contrary to the comments of the member for Bonney, is vast and it is ever growing, particularly in the term of the Palaszczuk Labor government since I was elected. Our protected area estate requires ongoing management and adjustments for balancing competing priorities locally. That is what the motion before the House today goes to. These proposed revocations and inclusions are not contentious. In fact, they increase and enhance the size and the integrity of our protected areas and contribute to the overall growth of Queensland's precious protected area estate.

These matters in the motion today include enormous increases to the size of our protected area estate. One set of parcels is over 2½ thousand hectares. Notably, in the Great Sandy Marine Park we are seeing an increase of 40,000 hectares—an increase of over seven per cent in the size of the Great Sandy Marine Park. The member for Bonney's ongoing commentary about insufficient increases in the size of our protected area estate in Queensland I would submit are completely groundless. We have a number of separate proposals before us today. One package of six proposals seeks to revoke land from the forestry estate to designate as protected areas for the first time. That includes: the entirety of Wickham Timber Reserve, which the member for Logan tells me he has gone bush walking in a few times and is very beautiful; the West Cooroy State Forest and portions of Beerwah State Forest; Deer Reserve State Forest; Lutton State Forest; and Mount Mee State Forest. Some of those are up to the north of the Moreton Bay region that I am proud to represent.

Together these parcels comprise over 2½ thousand hectares. They make a significant addition to our protected area estate. They also have an important history as part of our commitment to ending hardwood forest harvesting in South-East Queensland. Again, we saw the member for Bonney with one foot either side of that barbed wire fence that is being the LNP shadow environment spokesperson. On the one hand he is calling for an increase in the size of the protected area estate and on the other hand he is grumbling about our moves to continue to protect our precious wild spaces and reduce hardwood forestry gathering into the future. They do have an important history as part of the South-East Queensland agreements that ended hardwood forestry gathering and they provide crucial habitat for native species, including koalas. They are high-priority areas for inclusion in the protected area estate.

The adjustments to the Daintree National Park are also very positive. They come under the Eastern Kuku Yalanji handback agreement and involve, on the one hand, as the member noted, the revocation of a small area that has been inundated by natural changes to the course of the Daintree River, but, more importantly, over eight hectares that will be granted as Aboriginal freehold tenure to the Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation to support a native plant revegetation nursery. The change is accompanied by a conservation agreement that will ensure the protection of the parcel's conservation values into the future.

Moving to the proposal to revoke 0.8 of a hectare of the Kamerunga Conservation Park, I note that that supports the \$300 million Cairns Western Arterial Road upgrade project, something which the member for Cairns is hugely supportive of, along with the member for Barron River. It is an upgrade that is vital for the Cairns region and it has been carefully planned to minimise further adverse impacts on the Kamerunga Conservation Park which, I note, is also already degraded by soil loss, vegetation loss and invasive weeds caused by flood events. This \$300 million project will build a new two-lane bridge over the Barron River and duplicate the Cairns Western Arterial Road from Redlynch Connection Road in the south to the Captain Cook Highway in the north. It is an essential piece of infrastructure for the northern part of our state.

Alternative options for the upgrade were discussed between TMR and DES, but they all required that the road corridor be widened, and so there was no practicable way to achieve the essential road infrastructure upgrade without this revocation. I do note, though, that Transport and Main Roads has agreed to provide the Department of Environment and Science with suitable compensation for the minor loss of protected areas.

I know that the member for Hervey Bay will address the significant changes to the Great Sandy Marine Park at length, but they are very significant. They increase its size by 400 square kilometres, while removing about 26 hectares from the boundaries of the marine park. Overall, we will see an increase to the area of the marine park in the order of seven per cent. These changes will facilitate better management and improve visitor use. They make the marine park boundaries more logical, more precise and avoid capturing public infrastructure. They exclude boating infrastructure, allowing ongoing maintenance to be done without seeking specific permits. They will also support the production of digital maps that can be used as the basis for fishing apps and digital navigation aids. I know that boaties in the member for Hervey Bay's electorate will be very sympathetic, as they would be in my electorate, to the need to upgrade boating infrastructure as smoothly and quickly as possible.

Finally, I note that there are minor adjustments proposed to the boundaries of the Tallebudgera Creek Conservation Park that will seek to ensure residents have continued access to their properties in the future. I want to take a moment to knowledge the dedication of our rangers, our Indigenous rangers and officers from Queensland Parks and Wildlife and the Department of Environment and Science who work hard every day to manage and protect our precious wild areas in Queensland. Thanks to them, we can be confident that our protected area estate is managed with careful stewardship to preserve its values for current and future generations. I am grateful to the minister, to the committee secretariat and to my fellow committee members for their commitment to the legislative work of managing our state's protected areas. I commend the motion to the House.