




Speech By
Jessica Pugh

MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

Record of Proceedings, 11 October 2023

MOTION

Revocation and Dedication of Protected Areas

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (6.13 pm): I rise to speak to the revocation motion. In so doing, I reflect on the fact that I am married to a man from Beerwah, hence my interest in this particular topic. He is very passionate about where he comes from. Some of the language he uses around that passion is unparliamentary, but he is always excited whenever Beerwah is mentioned in parliament, especially when the Minister for Education mentions money for a Beerwah school. I digress.

I want to briefly cover some of the proposals around the particular areas in and around the beautiful Sunshine Coast hinterland region, particularly the Wickham Timber Reserve, the Beerwah State Forest, the Deer Reserve State Forest, the West Cooroy State Forest, the Luttons State Forest and the Mount Mee State Forest. There are six proposals that seek to revoke land from the forestry estate to allow the areas to be dedicated as protected areas. These are: the whole of Wickham Timber Reserve, the West Cooroy State Forest, parts of Beerwah State Forest, Deer Reserve State Forest, Luttons State Forest and Mount Mee State Forest. They total about 2,550 hectares. These actions are part of an initiative that our government has undertaken under successive environment ministers.

I would like to acknowledge the work of the former ministers in this space, Leeanne Enoch and Minister Scanlon, as well as the work of the current Minister for the Environment, Minister Linard. These actions are part of an initiative by the Palaszczuk government that is outlined in the Native Timber Action Plan which will guide the preservation of Queensland's timber industry. As I am sure all members of the House are aware because we are all members of the friends of the timber industry that visits parliament and puts up our beautiful Christmas tree each year, the timber industry in Queensland employs around 6,000 people and contributes about \$675 million into the Queensland economy every single year.

The plan affirms a commitment made in the South East Queensland Forests Agreement back in 1999 to end hardwood forest harvesting in the South East Queensland Regional Plan by the end of 2024. Wouldn't you know it, 2024 is almost here. The plan proposed the future direction of the timber industry to transition outside of the South-East Queensland area. Back in 2019 Leeanne Enoch, who was then the minister for the environment, announced that we would transfer up to 20,000 hectares of state forest areas in South-East Queensland, where logging will cease, to protected area in 2024. In December last year, the environment minister at the time, Meaghan Scanlon, announced that part of the aforementioned six forestry estates will be part of that 20,000 hectares of forest transfers as these areas contain crucial habitat for native species, including koalas. Now that harvesting has ceased over these areas and impediments to dedication have been resolved, these areas can be added into the protected area estate. I think we can all agree just how important that is.

On a personal note, I have an area that has been put aside as koala habitat in my area but we had not seen koalas there for about 20 years. Just the other week, the very first koala was spotted and photographed down in Pooh Corner. It is really important to keep these pieces of habitat. Even though we provided that habitat, for a very long time we had no proof those little furry fellows were in there—I

will not say 'koala bears' because we all know what happens when you do that—but they are back at Pooh Corner. Whether they have returned or what have you, it is exciting to have them there. It is great to have such a large tranche of habitat that has been committed. I note the passion of my good friend the member for Caloundra in advocating for this as well. He is very excited about it and I know his community is very excited about it because he represents my in-laws still. With those few words I commend this motion to the House.