



Speech By  
**Samuel O'Connor**


**MEMBER FOR BONNEY**

---

Record of Proceedings, 20 August 2024

## MOTION

### Revocation and Dedication of Protected Areas

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (12.10 pm): I will make a relatively brief contribution to the revocation and dedication of protected areas motion, about broader protected area policies and progress to achieve that. The LNP will, of course, not be opposing this motion, which will add over 12,000 hectares to the protected area estate which, if my math is correct, is around an extra 0.007 per cent of Queensland. I will come back to those percentages later.

A number of the changes here will increase conservation corridors between existing national parks. I will be followed in this debate by the member for Nanango, who will raise some of the particular issues that have come up in her patch. In particular, the member will raise the disappointing process that has been gone through. I know that the member has written to the minister about this and she will very forcefully raise those concerns in the House.

**Mrs Frecklington:** No pressure.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** You're welcome. It is disappointing to hear what the member for Nanango has told me. We need to take landholders on a journey. We need to listen to these regional communities. That clearly has not happened with some of the proposals before us. The member for Gympie, if time permits, will also make some commentary around sustainable timber supplies. He loves to talk about that, and rightly so. The member for Glass House would love to have contributed but, unfortunately, we have very limited time.

It is appropriate to use this motion to once again draw the attention of the House to the lack of progress made by this government to conserve more of what makes Queensland special. It was the Premier himself, who once was the environment minister, who set the target of protecting 17 per cent of Queensland way back in 2015. In 2016 he said—

Queensland is home to extraordinary landscapes and native species, and our goal is to eventually increase Queensland's protected areas to 17 per cent.

It seems that 'eventually' was the most important word in that statement, because here we are after nine years of Labor and less than one per cent has been added to the protected area estate. They started at 7.8 per cent. That is what then environment minister Andrew Powell left them. They are now at 8.95 per cent. That is an increase of just 0.79 per cent in a decade. For all this government's talk, it has barely moved the needle to increase the conservation of our state.

At estimates the government revealed that one of the recent national park dedications, which they announced a couple of months ago, was actually a property purchased by the member for Glass House way back in 2014, and that is Turkey Station. It has taken them a decade to dedicate it. That is just extraordinary. That is the length of time it has taken to act. 'Eventually' they will take action. 'Eventually' they deliver on a promise they made a decade ago.

Queenslanders have stopped listening. Our environment is no better protected by just making announcements. It must be backed up by practical action. Labor are refusing to properly support alternatives to solely focus on more and bigger national parks. We have seen a coalition recently write to the minister urging more support for private protected areas, with AgForce, the Pew Charitable Trusts and our NRM Regions Queensland all coming together to say that we need more support for landholders to join the conservation estate.

An issue that is consistently raised is the management of these areas that we are dedicating. We are not going to stop talking about the need to properly manage our protected area estate, because this government has failed in this so badly and it takes regional communities for granted. That means they will not support some of these motions because they see the state that some of our national parks are in. Invasive species continue to take over many of our parks because this government places little priority in properly managing them. I will leave my contribution there. I will pass over to my colleague the member for Nanango.