




Speech By
Glen Kelly

MEMBER FOR MIRANI

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ADJOURNMENT

Mirani Electorate

 **Mr G KELLY** (Mirani—LNP) (9.25 pm): The electorate of Mirani would have to be one of the most diverse parts of Queensland. You can start in the old mining town of Mount Morgan, travel down the coast to the foothills of Central Queensland, head through the cattle country of the Marlborough Plains and end up in some of the richest canefields in the state around Mackay. It really is a snapshot of everything that makes regional Queensland great. Right at the very top of the Pioneer Valley sits one of the most stunning parts of our state—Eungella and the Mackay Highlands. For years this beautiful region was talked about for all the wrong reasons. The former government tried to force a pumped hydro project onto a small community right in the middle of pristine rainforest and some of Queensland's best nature. It would have ripped through country that should never have been touched. It divided neighbours, put pressure on families and businesses and left a cloud of uncertainty over a place which deserved so much better.

I am proud to be part of a government that is actually listening—listening to locals, listening to the common sense and stopping the Pioneer-Burdekin pumped hydro project—but the truth is that the damage it caused is still felt today and now this region needs something positive—something that gives people hope and opportunity again, and that opportunity is staring us in the face. As Queensland looks ahead through Destination 2045, we have been asked to identify the places that would define tourism and our state for decades to come. Eungella is one of those places. The views are world class, the wildlife is unique, the rainforest is ancient and the small communities up there have more heart than most cities will ever understand. Where else in Australia can you stand above the clouds at sunrise, walk through the rainforest and spot a platypus in the wild at any time of the day?

To get this right, we need to make sure the people who live there—the people who know the mountains better than anyone—are the ones shaping the future. So today I am calling for expressions of interest from locals, tourism operators, accommodation providers, conservation groups and anyone who cares about the Pioneer Valley. I am establishing a strategic advisory committee for Eungella and the Mackay Highlands to work directly with me on identifying ecotourism opportunities, improving visitor experiences and building a stronger local economy. This is the chance to build something real—something that creates jobs, strengthens small communities and protects the environment for generations to come. I encourage all Queenslanders to come and see the Pioneer Valley and Eungella for themselves to see the magic we nearly lost and help us build a brighter future for an incredible region.