




Speech By
Hon. Leanne Linard

MEMBER FOR NUDGE

Record of Proceedings, 19 November 2025

MOTION

Revocation and Dedication of Protected Areas

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (3.50 pm): I rise to speak to the revocation motion. I would like to say at the outset that the Labor opposition will not be opposing this motion. The matters contained in the substantive motion are largely administrative in nature. I take this opportunity to thank the minister for agreeing to my request for a briefing and deputy director-general Ben Klaassen for taking the time to provide that briefing along with Sam from the minister's office. As I mentioned, the motion is largely administrative in nature: realignment of an existing road corridor in Black Mountain National Park; formalising existing access to mining tenements on unallocated state land adjoining Burrum Coast National Park; formalising historical access to a tourism facility on private property adjacent to Main Range National Park; the excision of an existing road from Ngalba Bulal National Park to facilitate access for 11 properties; transfer of land containing Black Mountain Rural Fire Brigade in Tewantin National Park to the Queensland Fire Department; resolution of an historic encroachment by an adjacent private freehold property in Eumundi Conservation Park; and last but not least, and certainly not just administrative in nature, is the revocation of the setting apart and declaration of the entirety of Powrunna State Forest for dedication as the new Dhuny Yumba—meaning home of the wombat—National Park (Scientific).

Northern hairy-nosed wombats are one of the rarest land mammals in the world, but they are also a magnificent Queensland conservation story and one that the Labor opposition is very proud of. It is truly amazing to see how far we have come since the population of wombats at Epping Forest in inland Central Queensland dropped to around 35 in the 1980s. Now the population at Epping Forest is around 400. A second colony of northern hairy-nosed wombats was established in 2009 at Richard Underwood Nature Refuge at Yarran Downs near St George where about 18 wombats currently live. In June of last year I had the pleasure of announcing that the first northern hairy-nosed wombats had been released to explore their new and third home at Powrunna State Forest to create a self-sustaining population there. Why these three locations, you ask? As wombats dig vast burrows they require a specific ratio of land and clay in the soil to support their burrows and ensure they do not collapse. The environment at Powrunna State Forest has these unique soil characteristics.

A conservation story like this does not just happen. The translocation program has taken years of meticulous planning by the department of environment which not only installed predator-proof fencing around the forest, water infrastructure and remote cameras prior to their arrival, but also dug starter borrows to ensure the wombats could immediately find cover. A very warm shout-out to the department of environment, a department that knows well my enduring dedication and affection for them and their remit to conserve our great Queensland environment. I also want to acknowledge the Gunggari Native Title Aboriginal Corporation and Gunggari native title holders, Glencore and the Wombat Foundation, who partnered in this recent translocation and who were so integral to bringing a species back from the brink of extinction. It is just one of the many environmental success stories that our former Labor government can lay claim to.

I welcome the opportunity to speak about Queensland's protected area estate because there are so many other important environmental achievements in respect to protected areas that the Labor opposition can lay claim to but, more importantly, remain incredibly dedicated to—like the 1.23 million hectares of additional protected area that we delivered or the historic \$262.5 million investment we committed to allow for the expansion of protected areas. We expanded the protected areas of the Great Sandy Marine Park by nine per cent, banned new oil and gas in the flood plains of the Lake Eyre Basin, moved to remove the use of gillnets in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and, of course, set our interim emissions reduction target of 75 per cent by 2035, climate change being the single greatest threat to our terrestrial and marine protected areas.

What we saw which was of concern was that there is no new or additional money in the budget to expand our protected areas, just an empty commitment to deliver more protected areas in one term under the new LNP government than our former government did in a decade—a commitment the Treasurer made in the budget, the environment minister and Premier doubled down on and many LNP members included in their speeches on the budget.

Given we delivered at least 1.23 million hectares of additional protected areas, those opposite will need to add at least 307,500 hectares each year this term. I will keep doing the maths for those opposite because they love to make grand claims but they simply do not back them up. We are now passed the one-year mark into this term. The government has added a grand total of less than 4,000 hectares to protected areas in Queensland. They claim in excess of 10,000 hectares. Some of us have very long memories. Of the nearly 9,000 hectares the LNP government announced to great fanfare by the Premier and environment minister on Queensland Environment Day that they were adding to national parks and nature refuges, 90 per cent of those additions were started under us: Labor's commitment to the environment, Labor's protected area expansion, Labor's homework.

Mr Bennett interjected.

Ms LINARD: That hit a nerve. Of the 8,700 hectares they claimed on that day, 2,000 are actually theirs and they have since announced around another 1,976. We are really talking about 4,000 hectares of additional protected area. We support those 4,000 hectares, we celebrate it, because every single hectare of additional protected area is incredibly important to Queensland's environment. Queensland is the most biodiverse state in the country, one of the most biodiverse in the world, and we need to protect it. It is not 1.23 million hectares as we did, but we know the LNP lack our ambition for the environment. We do not have any time left in this first year. Their one-year anniversary has passed. We do wish to see those additional 300,000 hectares they promised. They have already failed on that front. Our opposition will hold them to the commitments that they made to Queenslanders, to the Queensland environment. As I said at the outset, the Labor opposition will not oppose this revocation motion.