

**Question on Notice
No. 107
Asked on Thursday, 14 February 2008**

QUESTION:

MR O'BRIEN asked the Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation (Mr McNamara) — Will he advise what progress is being made to increase the amount of land within the National Park Estate and other State protected areas?

ANSWER:

The Government is committed to ensuring Queensland continues the effort to establish a World Class Reserve System of National Parks and other Protected Areas that is comprehensive, adequate and representative.

Queensland leads Australia in most aspects of a comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system, including having the largest area of National Park and the highest level of representation of Regional Ecosystems in the Protected Area Estate.

Queensland has 282 national parks covering almost 8,000,000 hectares, from desert to rainforest to reef.

That compares to about 5,000,000 in NSW and 3,000,000 in Victoria.

The area of protected areas in Queensland is two-thirds the size of Victoria and bigger than the state of Tasmania.

We have spent \$51 million over the past 4 years acquiring land for conservation.

An election commitment of \$30 million for new acquisitions is well on the way to being implemented with over half this funding now expended and the remainder committed to priority purchases.

This includes the acquisition of wetlands and rainforests, in order to achieve improved representation of regional ecosystems in the National Park Estate.

The list of priority properties targeted by this funding is being continually refined, and bioregions that are not adequately represented in the national park estate are a key focus of this additional funding.

The Daintree rainforest program purchases land north of the Daintree River to remedy inappropriate subdivisions that were approved in the 1980s and consolidates these lands in to the World Heritage Listed National Park.

To date, more than 171 lots covering 264 hectares have been acquired and about another 38 of approximately 400 priority lots are being negotiated.

The current budget for this component of the program is \$10 million.

The South-East Queensland rainforest program seeks to consolidate existing National Parks in the fastest growing region in the State, focusing on rainforest biodiversity hot spots.

So far, 28 lots have been acquired covering 474 hectares with a further three properties covering 29 hectares pending settlement.

The budget for this component is \$40 million.

In addition, the EPA continues to implement the current Cape York Peninsula acquisition program.

The Cape York Peninsula program has already acquired more than 300,000 hectares of new National Parks, and negotiations are underway for several priority acquisitions that will increase the level of protection in this unique Region.

In summary, the government is well on target to meet its commitment of having five percent of Queensland as National Park in order to maximise the representation of biodiversity and prevent further fragmentation of the natural landscape.