

Question on Notice
No. 1465
Asked on Thursday, 9 October 2008

QUESTION:

MR LAWLOR asked the Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation (Mr McNamara) –

Will he provide an update on the progress of implementation of the 2006 election commitment to provide horse riders with access to specified lands under the South East Queensland Forests Agreement and what funds have been committed to this election commitment?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Southport for this question and the opportunity to provide an update on the implementation of the commitment to provide horse riders with access to South East Queensland Forests Agreement (SEQFA) lands.

In December 2007 I announced the South East Queensland horse riding trail network, which delivers on the Government's 2006 election commitment to provide horse riders with continued access to some former management roads that have been used for horse riding through specified SEQFA lands, namely in the Noosa; Gold Coast; Western Brisbane; Caboolture-Bellthorpe; and Kenilworth-Mapleton areas.

These horse riding trails will be managed to ensure that the values of the adjacent national parks are protected. Funding of \$650,000 has been allocated to establish the trail network, including installing horse trail signage and undertaking protective works such as hardening creek crossings.

The finalisation of horse riding issues on these lands clears the way for the remaining 150,000 hectares of SEQFA lands to be transferred to protected area. The Environmental Protection Agency is progressively transferring these lands over the next 12 months. The horse riding trails will remain as narrow corridors of forest reserve through these protected areas.

The forest reserves making up the horse trail network will be subject to a review that will take account of the impacts of horse riding and other activities. The review will be based on assessments carried out by an independent scientific advisory committee that I have established under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, comprising experts across a range of biophysical and social science fields.

The scientific advisory committee is considering scientific, environmental, social and economic issues in developing a program to monitor impacts on the trails and adjacent areas, and will advise me as the monitoring progresses. The monitoring program will operate over the next 20 years with funding of \$150,000 per year.