

Question on Notice

No. 444

Asked on Tuesday, 2 April 2019

MR M BERKMAN ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF, MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND MINISTER FOR THE ARTS (HON L ENOCH)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the government's plans for ecotourism in national parks—

Will the Minister (a) provide details of any proposed exclusive leases to private ecotourism entities in addition to those at Hinchinbrook, Noosa and Whitsunday, (b) advise how the government's ecotourism plans are consistent with its 2015 and 2017 commitments to reverse the LNP's changes that weakened the Nature Conservation Act and restore the cardinal principle and (c) advise how the government will ensure private lessees in national parks perform adequate maintenance and minimise costs to taxpayers?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for the question.

The Palaszczuk Government's *Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2016* reinstated the conservation of nature as the sole object of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* so that the preservation of the natural condition of the protected area estate will take precedence over other objectives. All proposals for ecotourism within the protected area estate must demonstrate that the use is consistent with the natural and cultural resources and values of the area.

Spicer's Retreats, Hotels and Lodges Pty Ltd has been approved to develop a multi day walking track and two sustainable ecotourism facilities within Main Range National Park.

National Parks Pty Ltd (trading as O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat) has been approved to revitalise and take on the ongoing management of the existing Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service Green Mountains Camping Area, within Lamington National Park.

The Department of Environment and Science (DES) continues to partner with the Department of Innovation, Tourism Industry Development and the Commonwealth Games on the Wangetti Trail proposal, a long distance walk and mountain biking track between Palm Cove and Port Douglas.

Under section 35 of the Nature Conservation Act, lessees will be required to maintain the leased area to a high standard and conduct monitoring, as agreed by DES. This will be closely monitored with regular reporting required of the lessee, to DES. Lessees will be required to pay a financial contribution to the State, which will contribute to the management and conservation of Queensland's protected area estate with no added costs to taxpayers.