

Question on Notice

No. 661

Asked on Wednesday, 26 May 2021

MRS L GERBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND YOUTH AFFAIRS (HON M SCANLON)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the \$7.28m line item in the Budget 2020-21 Capital Statement titled Protect Area Land Acquisition and Management—

Will the Minister provide details of (a) how much of the allocated monies have been spent to date, (b) the amount of land acquired so far, (c) a break up of allocated monies between acquisitions and management and (d) if all monies are not to be spent this Financial Year how much the underspend will be and reason for it?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

Since February 2015, protected areas in Queensland have increased by over 1.22 million hectares – up from 7.56 per cent to 8.26 per cent of the State. Queensland's protected area system now covers an area more than twice the size of Tasmania and includes the largest private protected network in Australia.

On 3 October 2020, the Queensland Government released *Queensland's Protected Area Strategy 2020-2030*, a ten-year plan for supporting the growth, management and sustainability of national parks and other protected areas. An initial investment of \$60 million over four years has been allocated to implement the strategy, which includes \$28 million over four years for acquiring and managing new land for addition to Queensland's public protected area estate.

The \$7.28 million allocated in the 2020-21 financial year is for land acquisitions. Funding for management, community engagement and capital set up is allocated over the 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years as new land acquisitions are finalised, and properties are dedicated as protected areas under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.

In 2021, the Department of Environment and Science has already acquired 42 hectares of land to extend the Mon Repos Conservation Park. This acquisition will protect dune ground water recharge areas critical to the sustainable ecological function of the internationally significant marine turtle rookery.

The department is engaged in advanced commercial-in-confidence negotiations with a number of landholders from across the State with a view to entering into contracts of sale for priority land acquisitions. As this information is commercial-in-confidence, I am not able to provide any further details at this point in time.

The funds are fully allocated to the properties under negotiation.