Question on Notice

No. 979

Asked on Wednesday, 1 September 2021

MR S KNUTH 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 Nature Refuge Program—

Will the Minister advise if the State Government will consider the introduction of state-wide rate concessions/rebates or reduced rates through the introduction of land use categories for conservation for any parts of properties that have been placed under a Nature Refuge status to support the volunteer conservation work of Nature refuge owners?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

The Queensland Government recognises the significant contribution of nature refuge landholders to the conservation of significant natural and cultural values on privately-owned land. Through Queensland's Protected Area Strategy 2020-2030, the Government has committed $8 million over four years to incentivise the continued growth of the private protected area network and to support more effective management of private protected areas through an expanded NatureAssist toolkit.

The NatureAssist toolkit offers a number of initiatives that offer improved access to management tools and advice for nature refuge landholders to better support their management aspirations. One such NatureAssist-funded scheme offering financial support to landholders is the Nature Refuge Landholder Grants Program. Since its inception in 2017, this Program has invested $1.47 million in 253 landholder grants delivering conservation projects on nature refuges across the State.

The choice to provide rates relief to nature refuge landholders is one to be made autonomously by local government authorities. It is pleasing that some councils do offer this relief. The State would welcome additional local government authorities offering relief. The Department of Environment and Science will continue work to identify opportunities to encourage further expansion of the private protected area.