

## Question on Notice

No. 1216

Asked on Wednesday, 11 October 2023

**MS S BOLTON** ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF, MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS (HON L LINARD)—

### QUESTION:

With reference to the conflict and complexities being experienced regarding ecotourism developments in Queensland—

Will the Minister commit to restoring the primacy of the Cardinal Principle in the Nature Conservation Act and remove the exception that allows for these developments in National Parks?

### ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

Under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, the cardinal principle for the management of national parks in Queensland requires that these areas are managed to provide, to the greatest possible extent, for the permanent preservation of the area's natural condition and the protection of the area's cultural resources and values. The cardinal principle must be upheld in all aspects of national park management, including in the consideration of ecotourism proposals on national park.

The Queensland Government has supported low-impact, best-practice ecotourism development in, and adjacent to protected areas, including national parks, to encourage new visitors to these areas and help stimulate local economies.

In the case of ecotourism developments, such projects can only proceed where they meet specific requirements of the Act – requirements which only allow for ecotourism development in national parks, where it:

- is in the public interest;
- is ecologically sustainable; and
- provides to the greatest possible extent, for the preservation of the land's natural condition and the protection of the land's cultural resources and values; a requirement that is reflective of the requirements of the cardinal principle.

Ecotourism projects must also align with the Department of Environment and Science's Implementation Framework for Ecotourism Facilities on National Parks.

Furthermore, through the Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport, the Queensland Government is providing \$9.2 million through the Activate Ecotourism Infrastructure initiative, to support ecotourism and nature-based infrastructure adjacent to or near a public protected area.

The Queensland Government considers that the requirements of the Act, the supporting Implementation Framework and active support for ecotourism infrastructure adjacent to national parks strike the right balance for protecting national parks while supporting sustainable ecotourism projects that encourage visitors to experience Queensland's unique natural environment.