




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

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MOTION

Revocation of State Forest Areas

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (5.42 pm): I rise to address the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection's proposal via the Governor in Council under section 30 of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 that a regulation be made requesting the revocation of a specified and declared area of Beerwah State Forest—this area being 744.558 hectares—and that the revoked and declared area then be declared an additional area of the Mooloolah River National Park.

The Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection when introducing this proposal to the Queensland parliament offered a rationale based on needing to increase the level of protection of this area for biodiversity purposes given it contained essential habitat for 15 species of vulnerable frog, including the wallum sedgefrog, and 10 species of migratory bird. Whilst there may be some conjecture with respect to this given biodiversity and ecosystem considerations by the federal environment department, I accept some of the explanation and basis for the proposal as outlined by the minister. However, there are some areas in there as far as existing infrastructure, a nursery and other areas, which give me cause for concern as to how the area itself will be managed.

Adjacent to the revocation proposal is where much needed critical infrastructure for the Sunshine Coast is to be upgraded. The \$1 billion Caloundra interchange, including expansion of the Bruce Highway to six lanes between the Caloundra turn-off and the Sunshine Motorway exit to Maroochydore and the upgrade to Steve Irwin Way, is much needed infrastructure for the Sunshine Coast. I acknowledge and congratulate many Sunshine Coast LNP members, specifically the member for Caloundra, for advocating with respect to this infrastructure over a long period of time.

The LNP will not be opposing the proposal under section 30 of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 with respect to the regulation revoking the specified areas of Beerwah State Forest, but I think it is important as part of this debate to acknowledge the LNP's strong track record of support for Queensland's national parks. In 1998 the Borbidge-Sheldon coalition government recognised and addressed the chronic underfunding level inherited from the previous Goss Labor government for our national park estates with specific additional financial allocations being made by then premier Borbidge for capital works and operational management. The Borbidge-Sheldon coalition government realised and acknowledged that these special areas—our national parks—had an important role to play in the economic and social structure of Queensland quite apart from their conservation value. Premier Borbidge and his government made significant additional commitments with respect to Fraser Island and the Great Sandy National Park.

It is important to also note that the Newman LNP government in 2013 passed amendments in the Queensland parliament to cut red tape and increase protection for Queensland's national parks. These amendments meant our national parks and other natural areas could be managed more

effectively, and by modernising the then legislation it made it easier, faster and less costly to respond to changes when they occurred. I acknowledge the former minister, the Hon. Steve Dickson MP, the then minister for national parks, recreation, sport and racing, for his achievements and reforms including delivering the joint management by Aboriginal traditional owners and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services of a number of national parks in Cape York.

Over many years and since becoming the shadow minister for national parks, I have visited many of our terrific and iconic national parks right across our state, including the Great Sandy National Park, Lamington National Park, Bunya Mountains National Park, North Stradbroke Island and the D'Aguilar National Park, which is located, in part, in my electorate of Moggill. Recently one of my local environment organisations, THECA, The Hut Environmental and Community Association, held a barriers to biodiversity conservation forum at the Queensland Centre for Advanced Technologies at the CSIRO at Pinjarra Hills. I was delighted to attend that forum and hear some evidence based strategies and enhancements to our governance framework which could certainly deliver greater improvements for the management of our national parks. It was also great to see Councillor Norm Wyndham from the Brisbane City Council in attendance.

The rich and diverse range of flora and fauna in our national parks is very special, and it is vital that we protect these areas not only now but also into the future given that there are some biodiversity benefits that can be protected for future generations. In conclusion, I reiterate that the LNP will not be opposing the minister's proposed revocation declaration with respect to the specified area as outlined.