



Speech By  
**Sandy Bolton**


**MEMBER FOR NOOSA**

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**INNOVATION, TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**Report, Motion to Take Note**

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (3.56 pm): I would like to thank the Queensland Audit Office for the comprehensive Auditor-General's report No. 7 of 2018-19 titled *Conserving threatened species*. This report, which was tabled in November 2018, focused on the status at that time of the strategy that the government had in place to protect our threatened species and their habitats. Currently, Queensland is host to 995 listed threatened species. Of those, 441 are threatened nationally, and 731 are native flora and 224 are native fauna. The report identified the main threats to our native plants and animals as habitat loss, invasive plants and animals, fire and climate change.

The audit highlighted some concerning gaps in the Department of Environment and Science's implementation of a cohesive and coordinated strategy to manage conservation and recovery efforts, particularly in the process of listing threatened species in Queensland. I referred to this in part 2 of the Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019.

In March 2017 Queensland signed the *Intergovernmental memorandum of understanding—agreement on a common assessment method for listing of threatened species and threatened ecological communities*. The audit identified that there is a long way to go to ensure it is able to meet the obligations of that MOU. As outlined in the audit, it is imperative that DES, DAF and DNRME work together to develop a clear strategy to protect and restore threatened species' populations. Much work continues to be done by dedicated stakeholders, including QPWS, the Environmental Policy and Planning unit, scientists, traditional owners and local conservation groups to rebuild those fragile habitats. From a legislative perspective, it was vital for the government to coordinate as well as fund the collective efforts of those groups to implement the common assessment method—CAM—and align legislation accordingly to remove discrepancies with the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

The CAM has the potential to be a highly effective and relatively simple mechanism to record, approve and monitor threatened species across every state and territory in Australia in line with the International Union for Conservation of Nature's best practice model. Having a transparent and consistent assessment process that is aligned with national data will allow both state and federal funding to be coordinated and prioritised based on need as opposed to the ad hoc nature in which funds have been disbursed in the past. Pleasingly, this has commenced as part of the passing of the GBR bill.

In addition, as the audit recommends, Queensland needs to urgently finalise a fully funded protected area strategy. To save time and money it would make sense to refresh and implement the well-regarded biodiversity strategy for Queensland.