

Legislative Council
Hansard
Wednesday 2 September 2026

[excerpt...]

The President, **Mr Farrell**, took the Chair at 11 a.m., acknowledged the Traditional People and read Prayers.

MOTION

Nature Conservation Act 2002 Proclamation - Calverts Hill Nature Recreation Area

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I rise to speak on this motion. To be upfront, I'm not overly familiar with the Calverts Hill Nature Reserve near Cremorne. However, when this Parliament is asked to alter a nature reserve classification from a nature reserve to that of a nature recreation area, even if it is a partial parcel within a remaining nature reserve, it's incumbent upon all of us to examine very closely the rationale behind such a change in reserve status and the veracity of the reassurances given, particularly in light of the 2024 State of the Environment report which recommended as recommendation 10 - That the Tasmanian Government expand Tasmania's terrestrial reserve system where it's necessary to provide greater protection for underrepresented ecosystems.

So, in a biodiversity crisis and climate crisis, it is a fair expectation that the government should be prioritising extending and enhancing protections in Tasmania's reserves network rather than down grading existing reserves status.

Mr President, due to those considerations, the fact that the Calverts Hill Nature Reserve was created for the conservation purpose of the endangered *Eucalyptus morrisbyi*, I sought feedback from key stakeholders, including the Tasmanian Conservation Trust and Environment Tasmania on the need for this proposed alteration of the class of reserved land. Generally speaking, those who know this particular stretch of coastline well, value the stretch of walking track extending from Mary's Beach near Lauderdale to Cremorne. And those familiar with the Calvert Hill Nature Reserve are very aware it was created as a result of a purchase of private land, mainly with the \$300,000 of Commonwealth government funding in the 1990s to conserve the endangered *Eucalyptus morrisbyi*.

It's fair to say, Mr President, that where there is some general disquiet over the proposed and perceived down grading of the reserve status of the identified 8.295 hectare parcel of land within the nature reserve, it's primarily about the precedent such a reclassification may set, rather than the reclassification itself. The information provided by the government states that the purpose for the reclassification of the reserved status of the identified parcel of land is to develop the Clarence Coastal Trail along the coastal side of Calverts Hill Nature Reserve, as requested by Clarence City Council. We've been told it's been identified that a formal track is required rather than the informal one that's there now, I understand, and a track which facilitates recreational activities such as dog walking management along that section of the coastline, particularly in regard to more safely and accessibly.

Those who know the Calverts Hill Nature Reserve well informed me that currently there isn't a formal track and in places the current trail winds quite closely to the steep cliff edges

and gullies. In this context, there's a recognition that a formal track with fencing is required for safe access, particularly for activities such as dog walking. However, that does highlight the tension between areas of vulnerable and endangered species being reserved primarily in recognition of those significant biodiversity values and areas primarily reserved as multi use conservation areas. The motion before us will see both those categories within the one broader Calverts Hill reserved area as per the identified targeted 8.295 hectare parcel of land to be reclassified.

In light of that tension of the primary purpose for reserve status, I'm hoping the government can provide further detail and commitments on the record here today, regarding the ongoing protection of the core conservation values for which the reserve was first established. So specifically, and as I sort of had previously flagged in briefings with the Government, I am specifically seeking clear undertaking to be placed on the public record from the Leader, hopefully, that the only purpose of the proposed reclassification of the identified parcel of land is the provision of the formal walking track infrastructure, including the proposed fencing.

Additionally, can the leader clarify specifically, how wide a strip of reserve land has been identified as necessary for the new walking track? Will it be 100 metres wide or wider? Has it been identified as the most minimum width that is possible to achieve the track that's required?

Further, can the leader clarify the purpose of the new walking track infrastructure? It's presumably for use by locals and visitors to enjoy the appropriate recreational pursuits such as dog walking, but I would like to have it confirmed, is it intended to benefit any other purpose, particularly any nearby or future commercial interests that are looking at developments in that area?

Regarding the walking tracks citing, can the leader confirm it will be predominantly positioned along the highest part of the reclassified area to understand to be the western side of that reclassified area? Where is the main population of the endangered *Eucalyptus morrisbyi* in relation to the proposed reclassification.

I do note, Mr President, during the briefing we were provided with a map which is very useful to see that, in fact, it appears that those stands of trees are farther away from the reclassification. Perhaps the Leader could confirm what measures will be put in place to ensure the continued conservation of the *Eucalyptus morrisbyi* protected by the conservation status of the Calverts Hill Nature Reserve once the reclassification of the coastline parcel has gone through? And can the Leader clarify whether the government's aware of any further plans for any other types of developments which may be permitted or considered following this instance of downgrading a parcel of land within the broader Calverts Hill reserve area.

Mr President, I appreciate some of those queries we discussed and were raised during the briefings this morning but I'm interested in just as a matter of transparency and record, having them put on the record here today as part of this debate.

Mr President, as I stated at the beginning of my contribution, at a time of recognised biodiversity and climate crisis, it's jarring to find myself having to consider a reclassification of an established nature reserve which downgrades its classification. However, it's clear that the conservation values and purposes of the current nature reserve status is incompatible for the proposed walking trail and fencing works which even those stakeholders who care for the reserve acknowledge could assist in the long-term protection of its core conservation values, so that's positive.

Further, it's my understanding that the reclassified area from nature reserve to nature recreation area status does not contain any specimens of the endangered *Eucalyptus morrisbyi* and the tracks fencing may assist in protecting those populations elsewhere in the reserve.

To conclude, Mr President, given those considerations and pending the requested clarifications being placed clearly on the record today from the Leader, I'm currently inclined to support the motion.