

Locals agree to lock up their land to protect wildlife, including koalas, endangered Richmond birdwing butterfly



The richmond birdwing butterfly is one of the species found on the protected site at Currumbin Valley. (Supplied.)

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By Heidi Sheeran

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Land equivalent to 8,500 football fields is to become protected habitat for native wildlife in Queensland.

The state government announced Queensland's protected area has expanded by more than 4,600 hectares.

Environment Minister Meaghan Scanlon said it included former grazing land added to the Pinnacles National Park near Townsville and formerly unallocated state land has been added to the Wongaloo Conservation Park.

"So we can make sure the protection of important species continues in the long term," Ms Scanlon said.

She said this was in addition to the \$60 million protected area strategy funding, which was announced last year.

"Some of this land is a land transfer, some is private protected area," she said.

The state also announced half a million dollars in grants to go to landowners who are offering private land to become nature refuges.

"We're continuing to work with private landholders to conserve even more land in places like the Sunshine Coast, Logan and the Gold Coast," Ms Scanlon said.

"We've got three new private protected areas."

Protecting private Gold Coast land

Alan and Meryl Wilson own 30 hectares of land in the Currumbin Valley on the Gold Coast.

Mr Wilson said reaching out to the state to protect the area made sense.

"We're not experts at all on reforestation but my wife, in particular, saw the potential of this land and said we can't let this land be anything else but a restoration area," Mr Wilson said.

Species found on the land include koalas, the Richmond birdwing butterfly and the greater glider.

Andrew Picone, from the Queensland Conservation Council, welcomed the announcement, saying the increase in protected areas and management funding was crucial.

He said it was a step in the right direction but more needed to be done.

"We need to go from 8.2 per cent to 17 per cent in 10-15 years, to get the conservation estate on par with what we need to be doing to protect nature, to adequately manage these key areas and to protect biodiversity" he said.

"We need to be doing more to protect it sooner, scaling up the conservation efforts and doubling our protected-area estate."