



Speech by

**Jann Stuckey**

**MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN**

Hansard Wednesday, 10 February 2010

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## **AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS; CURRUMBIN WILDLIFE SANCTUARY**

**Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (10.36 pm): It never ceases to amaze me how many wonderful community-minded people live in Currumbin. I would like to congratulate the following outstanding citizens who were recognised in the 2010 Australia Day honours. Kelvin Kerkow received an Order of Australia Medal for his service to lawn bowls as a player, coach and mentor of junior bowlers and those with a disability. Billabong founder, Gordon Merchant, was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia for service to business and support for various community associations. Superintendent Jim Keogh was bestowed the Member of the Order of Australia, acknowledging his distinguished service over many years as a member of the Queensland Police Service. The recipient of the Gold Coast Youth Citizen of the Year Australia Day award for 2010 was Ben Naday from Tallebudgera.

Another Currumbin treasure is the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary and the new wildlife hospital. The sanctuary has had to struggle through tough times with downturns in tourism, while the Bligh government refuses to offer any funding at all and yet has allocated funds to Fleay's for years. Now with the brand-new wildlife hospital up and running and treating 5,000 injured wildlife, which is a 30 per cent increase on last year, the Bligh government continues to turn a blind eye. The sanctuary was forced to fund a great deal of the hospital itself—a project that cost \$1.5 million. Not a cent was contributed by the state government even though the federal government provided almost \$350,000.

Crippling operating costs of the hospital are reaching \$600,000 per year and are bleeding much-needed sanctuary funds. CEO Jonathan Fisher said that at this rate it is only a matter of time until they will not be able to take animals from the community. All the minister can say is that she will seek an urgent meeting with the National Trust and the sanctuary to establish 'the true financial situation'. I call on her to tell this parliament whether she has contacted either of these bodies yet for this urgent meeting. It has been nearly two weeks and injured native animals keep appearing at the hospital door.

The Currumbin sanctuary has already put in the hard yards over the last 60 years. Now it is up to this Labor government to lift its game and to contribute to the protection of our native creatures. Failure to do so exposes its environmental credentials as nothing but a sham. It is all very well for the Premier to use this unique location for blatant media opportunities when it suits her, as she did two days out from the last election, yet she is happy to starve it of funds.

Without state government funding, the world-class services that Currumbin sanctuary provides and the benefits to local and international tourism of this iconic Queensland attraction will suffer, and the finger will be pointed directly at this Bligh Labor government. The government must step up to the plate and prove that it cares about protecting our endangered wildlife.