



Speech by

Jann Stuckey

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

Hansard Wednesday, 7 October 2009

CURRUMBIN WILDLIFE SANCTUARY HOSPITAL

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—LNP) (9.30 pm): On Friday, 11 September the long-awaited and desperately needed state-of-the-art Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary hospital was officially opened much to the delight of animals and humans alike and to warm applause from a devoted local community. In the past 12 months the rickety old facility treated a record 4,500 injured wildlife and was literally falling apart at the seams. I know full well the struggles, the dedication and the considerable skills of staff and volunteers. I am also aware of the obstacles, especially financial ones, that had to be overcome.

This was a dream many years in the making. No-one carried the dream more uppermost in their mind than resident veterinary surgeon, Michael Pyne. To Michael's credit and that of the entire Currumbin Sanctuary team, led by the sanctuary CEO and the President of the National Trust, their determination was absolute. The hospital was made possible by generous donors, but I am very angry to say that the state government has not contributed one single cent towards the running of our sanctuary nor to this important facility to treat ill and injured wildlife. Shamelessly, the Premier used our sanctuary for a publicity stunt two days before the last election. I shall remain steadfast in my quest to lobby for state government funding for our beloved sanctuary.

There is no doubt our koala population is under threat as a result of rapid urbanisation and development in South-East Queensland. I am keen to do what I can to raise awareness to protect this unique Australian marsupial. The recent opening of the much needed wildlife hospital has placed the spotlight on the plight of our native animals and creatures who are subjected to increasing danger from human encroachment into their shrinking habitats. These vulnerable mammals are fighting to survive and I urge all honourable members to get behind the campaign by koala advocacy groups to make sure our councils and the state government take urgent steps to safeguard their habitats.

I have noticed a reduction in the number of koalas in my own acreage neighbourhood where it was once not uncommon to see them. Most nights I hear a lonely male koala grunting out his mating call to no avail. This is not surprising when figures reveal a 20-fold increase of wild koalas requiring medical attention in the past eight years.

On National Koala Day at Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary on Friday, 25 September I had the exquisite pleasure of officially naming a female koala joey after placing a successful and high bid at a corporate fundraising event earlier in the year. I named her Yani-Colleen and she is a real cutie at eight and a half months of age. I chose Yani because it means peaceful and Colleen after my mother who passed away during my teens and means young female.

As honourable members have heard, it has been a busy time for Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary. The Queensland Heritage Council has entered it in the Queensland Heritage Register after a nomination from the National Trust of Queensland. I urge honourable members to come and visit us soon. Members can come and feed the lorikeets for free and show their support for our Green Guardian program.