
Media Statement

Hon. Molly Robson, MLA
Minister for Environment and Heritage



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Queensland Wetlands For International Register

Two of Queensland most significant wetlands will be submitted to the Federal Government for listing as internationally important following tomorrow's State Cabinet meeting in Townsville, Environment and Heritage Minister Molly Robson announced today.

Making the announcement above one of the sites at Bowling Green Bay, south of Townsville, Ms Robson said the nominations would be the first from Queensland to the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat, otherwise known as the "Ramsar" Convention from its place of adoption in Iran in 1971.

Ms Robson said she will seek approval in Cabinet tomorrow to submit to the Commonwealth Government nominations for part of Bowling Green Bay and part of Moreton Bay to be listed under the Convention.

The Convention is an intergovernmental treaty which provides the framework for international co-operation for the conservation of wetland habitats and is the oldest of the global nature conservation treaties.

"Australia became a signatory to this Convention in 1975 and has 40 wetland habitats listed, covering more than four and a half million hectares," Ms Robson said.

"The nominations I have announced today, however, will be the first for Queensland - the only State which, until now, had no listed sites.

"The Queensland Government is able to make this submission to the Federal Government at this time because of a current revision of listed sites."

Ms Robson said that although Queensland had some of Australia's most important wetlands, the revision found that no nominations for listing had been made.

"Specifically, the Queensland Government's submission to the Federal Government will be for the nomination of the foreshores and adjacent wetlands of Bowling Green Bay and extensive areas of Moreton Bay," she said.

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"These listing will not require any change to current administrative or management arrangements and will have no financial implications.

"The Bowling Green Bay area to be nominated extends to more than 60km around the bay between Cape Cleveland and Cape Bowling Green and falls entirely within the existing Bowling Green National Park.

"The area is renowned for the permanent and migratory birdlife attracted to its freshwater and saltwater habitats," Ms Robson said.

The Moreton Bay nomination will include the intertidal and sub-tidal areas of the bay, together with the wetlands of the various islands of the bay and the ocean shores of Moreton, North Stradbroke, South Stradbroke and Bribie Islands.

"The Moreton Bay nomination recognises its international significance as a representative example of a natural or near natural wetland and its special value in maintaining the genetic and ecological diversity of the region," Ms Robson said.

"Moreton Bay is an important habitat for many species of birds and is one of only four recognised sites of significance for wintering migratory wading birds along the eastern Australia coast and is ranked among the top 10 dugong habitats in Australia.

"The boundaries for the Moreton Bay nomination have been developed so that they are acceptable to all relevant Ministers and State management and local authorities. The boundaries as proposed represent a consensus position."

Ms Robson said both nominations confirmed the Queensland Government's recognition of the international significance of the State's wetlands and its commitment to their protection. Other Queensland nominations could be expected.

"The nominations emphasise a co-operative, whole-of-government approach to such projects and have been made possible following extensive consultation with a number of State Government departments, including the Department of Primary Industries which assisted in drawing up the boundaries," she said.

"The Department of Primary Industries administers Queensland's marine wetlands and has specific responsibility for fisheries habitats. It manages areas adjacent to the Bowling Green Bay site and in Moreton Bay."

Ms Robson said close co-operation in the field among officers of the Department of Environment and Heritage and DPI would continue to take place in order to achieve a balance of environmental protection and the economically sustainable use of natural resources for production.

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