



STATE DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND INDUSTRY COMMITTEE

Members present:

Mr GE Malone (Chair)
Mr MJ Hart MP
Mr R Katter MP
Ms KN Millard MP
Mr BC Young MP
Mr W Byrne MP

Staff present:

Dr K Munro (Research Director)

PUBLIC HEARING—INQUIRY INTO RELEVANCE OF GOVERNMENT LAND TENURE ACROSS QUEENSLAND

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY, 29 AUGUST 2012

Rockhampton

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Committee met at 11.26 am

CHAIR: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I declare open the public hearing for the committee's inquiry into the future and continued relevance of government land tenure across Queensland. Thank you for your interest and, more particularly, your attendance today. I will introduce the members of the committee. My name is Ted Malone, I am the member for Mirani and chair of the committee. The other committee members are Bruce Young, the member for Keppel on my far left; Michael Hart, the member for Burleigh; Rob Katter, the member for Mount Isa, to my left; and Kerry Millard, the member for Sandgate. Kathy Munro is the chief research officer for the committee. Mr Bill Byrne, the member for Rockhampton, is representing the deputy chair of the committee, Tim Mulherin, today. Thank you for coming along, Bill.

The State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee is a committee of the Queensland Parliament and, as such, represents the parliament. It is an all-party committee that adopts a non-partisan approach to its proceedings. In relation to media coverage, the committee has resolved to allow television coverage and photography during the hearing. The hearing program today is as follows: from 11.30 to 12 o'clock we have Mr and Mrs Herbert and the Capricorn Conservation Council; and from 12 to 12.30 we have Joanne Rea from Property Rights Australia. We also have had a request from the Central Queensland University to address the inquiry.

Although the committee is not swearing in witnesses, I remind all witnesses that the hearing is a formal process of the parliament and, as such, any person who intentionally misleads the committee is committing a serious offence. For the benefit of Hansard, which is recording today, I ask witnesses to identify themselves when they first speak and to speak clearly and at a reasonable pace. It is the committee's intention that a transcript of the hearing will be published. Before we commence, I ask for mobile phones and pagers to be switched off or put on silent mode. We are now commencing our first hearing. I ask Mr and Mrs Herbert to come forward.

HERBERT, Mrs Catherine, Landholder, Private Capacity

HERBERT, Mr Ian, Landholder, Private Capacity

Mrs Herbert: My name is Cathy Herbert, but Ian will be making a presentation. I thank you for inviting us.

Mr Herbert: My name is Ian Herbert. We are here in a private capacity as landholders. Thank you for inviting us to make a submission. The whole purpose for declaring national parks is for the permanent preservation of an area's natural condition and for the protection of the area's values and cultural resources. You will find this in section 17 of the *Nature Conservation Act*. National parks comprise only five per cent of the Queensland land area. National parks are the only areas where the natural environment should come first.

We were appalled at statements by the Premier about 'opening up' national parks when they are already open. Do any of you on this committee have any idea of the effort and personal sacrifice by members of the public involved in declaring many of our national parks over the past 104 years? We are disgusted that ignorance by the present government and the pursuit of monetary return will compromise all this effort. Now we have the ludicrous situation where national parks responsibilities are squeezed into a department of sport and racing and, worse still, a minister who seems to have no idea of the principles underpinning national parks. Minister Steve Dickson was quoted on 14 August in the *Courier-Mail* as saying that of the 12.5 million hectares of land managed by his department—

Eighty-three per cent of that land, they have no idea what they're doing with. It could be utilised for grazing, some will be utilised for logging, some of it's going to be utilised for many, many different purposes.

Since this statement has not been retracted by anyone in the government, we fear that these views are fully supported by the LNP.

We dispute the assumption that vast amounts of money can be made from ecotourism. Lamington National Park and Carnarvon Gorge National Park are often described as jewels in the Crown of Queensland's national park estate. Binna Burra Mountain Lodge and Carnarvon Gorge Wilderness Lodge, respectively, are located in prime positions on the edges of these national parks. They are both high quality, highly accredited eco-resorts of international standing. In spite of this, they struggle to make a profit and operate on the basis that shareholders receive no dividends and only maintain their ownership for the love of it. We are shareholders of both of those companies.

The only way to increase profitability in this industry is to increase visitor numbers to levels that threaten the core values of national parks, as happened in Yosemite National Park in the USA decades ago. Lessons were learnt from that. We recognise the need for recreational activities such as horse riding. The Bicentennial National Trail from Cooktown to Melbourne is a valuable tourism and recreational Rockhampton

resource that has been totally underexploited. It is open to walkers, mountain bike riders, horses, et cetera—all the activities that the present government is trying to push into national parks. That is the conclusion of our statement.

CHAIR: Thank you very much. Do committee members have any questions that they would like to ask of Ian or Cathy?

Mr KATTER: I have asked this question before and I would be interested in your response on national parks and some of these preservation areas. You talked about preserving national parks. I am talking about placing new areas. I know in new areas, for instance, in some of these nature refuges or conservation areas, they take away the artificial waters.

Mr Herbert: Yes, I can give you an example.

Mr KATTER: I am going side wise. I know it does not directly address what you were talking about today, but I am interested to hear your response on what is a baseline. I would argue that in some areas where they introduce artificial waters it enhances the environment.

Mr Herbert: I will give you an example, if I may respond to that. We live on a 540 hectare property in the Mount Morgan Ranges. When we bought it, it had three dams on the property. Feral pigs came in, in the mid 1990s. We had no feral pigs before then. The feral pigs did not come from national parks; they came from private land down in the Bouldercombe Valley. All during the 2002-03 drought, we were chasing and hunting and trying to get rid of feral pigs, until finally we discovered that two of the dams up on the plateau country were keeping the feral pigs there. We got rid of those dams. We put a bobcat through the wall. Sure, we still have a bit of a feral pig problem, but the dams' purpose was just keeping feral pigs there. I do not know if that answers your question.

Mrs Herbert: I could add to that: there are a lot of areas in the central west and so on where water has been introduced. Sure, you get certain birds and things coming in and people say, 'Oh, the biodiversity is increasing', but other animals and birds disappear, because the wrong birds and animals have been attracted by the water. Just because you have water and you apparently increase biodiversity, does not mean that it helps those native animals that were there previously. In the Galilee Basin, which is threatened with mining, naturally there was never much water there, but it has the most prolific bird life I have ever seen, far better in fact than on the coast, without water.

Mr BYRNE: Your submission resonates strongly with me at a personal level. You said the matter of national parks is a focus of your submission. The core of the problem is the sustaining of national parks in the long term, particularly the improvement of some areas that are under serious duress. Would you like to provide any comments about issues such as funding models that would better sustain national parks or any other arrangements that would help improve the biodiversity held within those national parks?

Mr Herbert: I think governments have to get out of the myth that national parks have to pay for their own existence. National parks are there for the good of the community and the ecosystem in perpetuity. It makes about as much sense as saying that the police force has to pay for itself or every other service—public libraries have to pay for themselves. Governments have a responsibility to provide these areas and you cannot be looking at making a dollar out of everything.

CHAIR: Do you wish to respond to that?

Mrs Herbert: It is something from left field. Yes, I realise the management of national parks is an issue. It always has been. There are always complaints about fires, feral animals and weeds in national parks and there has to be adequate work done to manage that, as on all private property. We at home do that ourselves. In fact, we also work in the Bouldercombe Gorge Resources Reserve and help do things there, as volunteers.

There is this notion, as Ian said at the beginning, that if you put private enterprise into national parks the money will flow. We really do dispute that. It destroys what you have come to preserve. We were in Yosemite some decades ago when they had hordes of people in there. They had these huge mini towns and it was just amazing. They were just wrecking the joint. They had to pull back on that model, because it was far too destructive. If you want people to have a real wilderness experience, then by its very nature you cannot have too many people. It costs a lot to stay there and people do not stay, and we have ecotourism resorts falling overall over the place. On South Stradbroke Island there was that ecotourism resort that has failed. Sure, people contribute by paying for going there, as they do now. There are standard fees and so on. But this idea that it is a honey pot, A, probably is not so in fact and, B, should not be.

CHAIR: Just to clarify, we actually had hearings in Cairns yesterday. The Tribal elders talked to us about their custodianship of their land and some of the national parks. I was involved with the Berserker fires, which you might remember from a couple of years ago. Basically, all of the biodiversity and all of the animal life was destroyed.

Mrs Herbert: Hang on.

Mr Herbert: We dispute that.

CHAIR: Very fortunately nobody actually got burnt, but I have been back there a number of times. I saw it before it got burnt and I have seen it after it got burnt. There is no recognition between the two. It is a totally different environment up there now. You may dispute what I said and that is fine, but the reality is that the management of wilderness areas is not just about locking it up and walking away. There has to be a lot of money and a lot of manpower spent on making sure that those sorts of things do not happen again.

Mr Herbert: Precisely. We dispute the destruction of various ecosystems on Mount Archer, but we could probably leave that to a private time after this.

Mrs Herbert: Well, no.

CHAIR: It is an issue.

Mr Herbert: No, the issue was that when you visited Mount Archer that time after the fires—

CHAIR: No, I visited before and after the fires, and during.

Mr Herbert: And the areas that you said were destroyed were not destroyed. They are vine scrub, dry rainforest which, if you talk to any of the fire inspectors and people from national parks, do not burn. The burning was done in the open forest and it goes up to the edges of that dry rainforest area and it stops there. National parks and Rural Fire Brigade people know that these are areas that can be relied on as fire breaks. That statement was incorrect. The open forest that did burn was a grassy based forest; it was a grass based fire. There is a lot of guinea grass there.

The big issue for Mount Archer is not the mismanagement or lack of management of national parks; it is all the neighbours. It is all the freehold blocks backing onto it and people not looking after it or wanting to have proper controlled burns, which national parks endeavour to do every year. Every time they try to have a controlled burn, there is a lot of smoke and all the people of Rocky get upset. It is not for want of trying, but it might be for want of proper funding of national parks to do it. But have you got us off the subject?

I would say that it is not a question of locking them up and throwing away the key—not at all. We are managing our nature refuges. We would like all national parks to be managed and we work there a lot. But a big problem for Mount Archer is the guinea grass. Guinea grass is an absolute curse and it is all over private land—all the private land next door to the reserve. They were all absolutely chockers with the stuff. It is not surprising it was wild. The grass feed—green panic, buffel grass; all of those lovely things the graziers love—they are a real disaster for national parks, including inland, Berserker national park—

CHAIR: Being a grazier and a conservationist at the same time, I dispute that. But anyway, that is not for me to say. I do not believe we have any further questions.

Ms MILLARD: You have just made a comment in your last statement which was of some interest. I will just get you to refine that if you could. You are saying that, from your point of view, you are finding that a lot of the issues with regard to what is happening inside the current national parks are from the land—weeds and pests that are outside the national parks going in as opposed to some people may think that it is from what is happening inside the national parks going out.

Mr Herbert: Correct.

Mrs Herbert: That can happen. We have been burnt out. We have had fires threaten us on a number of occasions. We are next door to a reserve on top of a plateau and the neighbours light up down below and think, 'Oh, well, we don't need to worry about that.' We are constantly battling fires coming in. No fires come out of our place. No fires ever. And the weeds and the pigs—there were no pigs when we moved into our place and, five years later, in they came and they did not come from the reserve; they came from the lowlands. We know where the pigs were. Name calling is not an issue. We should be working together and recognise that there are weeds everywhere. One person's weed is another person's pasture. It is a matter of looking after your land and managing it properly and not impinging on someone else's. So if you want to have a fire on your own place because it is good for grazing, that is great. Just leave it there.

Mr Herbert: But, yes, only five per cent of the whole of Queensland is national parks and the big bulk of them are places like the Simpson Desert and Cape York. In most of the more inhabited areas of Queensland there is a very low percentage. So if all of this weed and feral animal and fire problem is coming from national parks, there is an awful lot of country out there that is not national park and there is still a weed, fire and feral animal problem.

CHAIR: Ian, just on that particular point, I think it is well recognised that we have not managed our national parks well. Fundamentally, as you say, there is a problem with the funding of them. Have you thought of any models that would support the manpower that is required to properly manage the national parks we have without even expanding?

Mr Herbert: No, it is a difficult one. It is one that the government just has to take a deep breath and say, 'These have to be funded.'

CHAIR: I am not pro the government or against it; we are an all-party committee, but when somebody sits down and decides whether we are going to spend money on our hospitals, or our roads, or our national parks, obviously, you would say that your priority would be in among all of that?

Mr Herbert: I am saying in among all of that do not forget the national parks. Hospitals and roads are always the big-ticket items but, then again, for the dollars spent you have a very dedicated mob of—

CHAIR: Certainly.

Mr Herbert: Of staff in QPWS. I have a feeling now that they might be totally demoralised by being put into a department, being stripped away from the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, which are their natural bedfellows. All of the work—the scientific work, the research work—done on acquisitions and how to manage national parks, conservation strategy and all of that kind of stuff is still in DEHP, yet national parks is over in Sport and Racing. It is probably outside your terms of reference.

CHAIR: It is beyond our reference.

Mr Herbert: But I think it is a ridiculous situation.

CHAIR: Government makes different decisions. We have had governments before that did not even have a minister for small business. So you have to say that that is a fairly important issue as well. So that will come and go. We all know departments remain, no matter who the government is. So I would not get too worried about that. Are there any other questions? Okay. Thank you very much, Cathy and Ian. We really appreciate you coming.

Ms Herbert: Thank you.

CHAIR: We will now move on to our next segment.

McCABE, Michael, Coordinator, Capricorn Conservation Council

Mr McCabe: My name is Michael McCabe and I am the coordinator for the Capricorn Conservation Council. As the submission indicated, we have been around since 1973 and have been involved in the campaign for the Mount Archer National Park et cetera. We have a diverse membership going out as far as the Galilee Basin, covering from Bundaberg to Mackay, and I am involved in every committee to mankind, which seems to keep me off the streets a bit.

In terms of general principles of potential conversion of leasehold to freehold, there is no fundamental problem in terms of that tenure, but our issue is the protections that currently exist—leasehold land is owned by the Crown—or all land, really, and will have various conditions. All the leases have conditions, even though we often argue about whether those conditions are being met or not, Great Keppel Island being one example where there has been a failure over 30 years for all the proponents, including the current, to meet lease conditions. So while there are arguments about those lease conditions being met, if the conservation of freehold means that there is even less control over appropriate environmental ecologically sustainable management, that would be of concern. So we would like to see a retention of and a strengthening of the current environmental management provisions on leasehold land—for example, grazing lease and forest reserves—to be strengthened and maintained. As an organisation, we fully support the idea of sustainable food production, sustainable grazing and nature conservation and there are many examples of that occurring in Central Queensland. Bimblebox Nature Refuge is a classic example, where both state and federal governments have in the past strongly supported the protection of that process—sustainable grazing and nature conservation.

As the previous speaker spoke about, the essential nature of the *Nature Conservation Act* is protection of nature and, obviously, part of that is the enjoyment by humans of nature. One of the difficulties, of course, in terms of funding models you talked about is that it is difficult to put a dollar value on the existence on the yellow chat in the Fitzroy delta, or the black throated finch in the Galilee Basin, but many people will speak of the vicarious benefits to the whole of the community—the sense of place, the sense of value, that something does exist. I have not been to Blackdown Tableland for two years, but the fact that I know it exists makes me feel good. It is part of my mental health—and that is not just me speaking; it is a well-known established fact that people have a good sense of place, a good sense that nature exists. I do not have the figures but people from the tourism group will often talk about the number of people who come to Australia because of its national beauty. Whether they would pay for an ecolodge in a national park is a difficult one, but those things must be taken into account in considering the protection of natural values.

For our landholders in Central Queensland there has been a massive revolution in thinking—from the days of the bulldozers to actually protecting their soils and land and valuing. The landholders from Rolleston through to the coast here, which are under threat from coalmining and coal ports, are asking, 'What about our wetlands? What about our native Queensland bluegrass? What about the protection of species we have done?' They are talking about that as strongly as they might talk about the value of their cattle production, or irrigation et cetera.

There is often a confusion, too, in terms of potential to transfer from leasehold to freehold of, say, open public space. We all want open public spaces—parks and gardens, et cetera. I notice within Gladstone there is often talk about improving the foreshores. That is not nature conservation. That is nice picnic areas and good enjoyment for the public, but it is not nature conservation. Open parks are wonderful for noisy mynas, but not for the small bird species, for example. So conservation values—the high ecological values—must be preserved. Primary producers have recognised the value of biodiversity. If you have healthy biodiversity—bird population et cetera—it is a recognition that your soil is healthy, you will get better production, you will recover better from drought. That has been spruiked from many a producer now.

There was consideration previously that Queensland has, I think, about half the level of the desired number of national parks. They are very much a patchwork quilt with a lot of holes in it. There was talk of up to half a million hectares of state forest being converted to national parks. I think there are a range of arguments and some of those are probably available. I have heard people who work in the field that some of the areas in the south of our part of the region with the cypress are probably able to have some sort of sustainable forestry occurring in those areas and probably within those sustainable forestry areas, which is good for soil carbon, good for sequestration, you could probably have some form of tenure which protects the environment and allows horse riding. But if there is an issue of introducing horses into the existing national parks that people have battled over for hundreds of years, that would be a completely different issue. As some on the panel would know, unmanaged horses are one of the biggest spreaders of weeds. I was recently on a committee for the management of feral horses in the Shoalwater Bay training area, which is a problem up there—as well as pigs.

The other thing is the big push, apart from the massive expansion of the resource industry at the moment, which is overwhelming many of our rural producers who are trying to protect their nature covenants, of urban expansion. Cities and towns in this area are struggling now with trying to meet the demand of the housing boom, which has followed the resources boom and the growth in Gladstone. Despite the fact that when you go to every planning meeting at local government level they talk about sustainable management, urban renewal and transport hubs and slightly more dense living—that is on every bit of butcher's paper I have seen in the past 20 years—it has never been enacted in any real sense, Rockhampton

because we can never catch up with the actual demand. So there needs to be much more stringent management of that urban sprawl, given that much of our urban lands sits on our best crop-growing land. Our best market gardens are sitting under us here in the alluvial soils of the Fitzroy

CHAIR: Covered in concrete.

Mr McCabe: Yes. We need to do something else. Where is that Gold Coast representative? While I do not particularly love high-rise, I think we have to go up rather than out.

One of the big issues for us, however, is in terms of any change that occurs we do not have enough baseline data. We have very little data about our river systems, the ecological status of the land. There is information existing around, for example, the remnants of the brigalow programs and I have seen some mapping—it is not yet available for release—but all is not lost. We have a great potential, whether it is our mining or our agricultural sectors, or national park expansion. We would like to see better connecting—the Dawson Range connecting up with the Expedition Range. There are absolutely wonderful opportunities to reconnect some of those corridors. None of us know what climate change will do. We need to give nature the chance to adapt around those things. There is immense opportunity for improving the biodiversity offset policy, negotiating with the mining companies to invest more in that, purchasing back land for combined sustained grazing et cetera and some sort of conservation park. We still have the opportunity to do that. Restoring our connection between the Great Dividing Range, those spur ranges and the creeks and rivers that flow into the Fitzroy—and, of course, we are now involved in the Burdekin. So there is a great opportunity, but we need a hell of a lot more scientific rigour, research, an opportunity to share knowledge about where are the offsets. How many hectares? How many offsets are there proposed? Where are they? Are they being managed? Are they under threat from future mining expansion? We have multiple plans. Central Queensland is now going to be subject to its own regional plan. I have been on many panels, again, for 30 years trying to get one happening. I was talking to Infrastructure and Planning the other day about that very matter—based on ecological knowledge, a database of what we have out there, what is able to be protected, how best to be to protect it, whether that is a joint thing in a leasehold or freehold or, as we would argue, more national parks.

In terms of the funding for national parks, I think the previous government had ideas of the garbage levies going towards that. In other states, when you go to Tasmania or the Alpine National Park, you pay a heavier fee to drive your car in there. So even though I would like to bushwalk for free everywhere, some user-pays may be the answer.

Essentially, while the state has a biodiversity strategy, it has only just come in in the last year. We are yet to see it becoming a whole-of-government document and actually being a fundamental thing in all decisions, whether it be conversion from leasehold to freehold, management of national parks or management of urban areas.

I have many maps here which talk about competing jurisdictions, competing planning proposals. Great Keppel Island has a current lease of what is called lot 21, which the lease document says cannot be converted to freehold. The public has many questions about the GKI resort as proposed. Will that be overridden by a new law that lifts that?

Curtis Island is the second largest island in Queensland and the largest in the Great Barrier Reef lagoon. It is largely in tact. Obviously the LNG industry has taken over the bottom segment of the island, but there is a massive opportunity for protection of an almost fragile and status island through better connection of the areas on that island. We have been waiting two years to hear what the LNG industry is actually going to do with their required offsets. We have not heard any results from that yet. That process may drag on for many years. So it is a frustration in our sector of a lack of knowledge, lack of proper integration of planning and lack of proper monitoring of whether these so-called offsets and protections are in fact occurring.

CHAIR: Thank you very much, Michael. I was pleased to hear you talk about offsets, because we have had the Conservation Council in other hearings talk about that as well. Indeed, I think it might have been in Cairns yesterday where the witness indicated that they did not believe that the environmental offsets were working well, that there was no correlation between the areas that should be reserved and the areas that are being reserved under the conservation offset. We talk about funding into national parks. What do you say to the proposition of some of the money that is used for offsetting going into funding the manning of our very pristine areas in our national parks? Does that make sense to you?

Mr McCabe: Yes. When companies cannot find an area to offset—and that is a struggle at the moment when you look at the amount of activity going on in Central Queensland and the Galilee Basin. We have run out of areas that actually can be regarded as an offset, that have a similar geography, ecology et cetera. And then those offsets are not protected. There is a fund that companies can pay into, but we would like to see much more rigour in that process to ensure there is some sort of guarantee. If a developer does an urban development nowadays, they pay a big chunk of money to council. If they do not meet the requirements they forfeit their \$2 million. There needs to be far more rigour, if people are going to invest in these projects, to say, 'If we cannot achieve what we set out to do over the life of our mine, that money has to go back into improving nature conservation, research, retention of land, land management programs.'

CHAIR: Of course, in that area there are bonds that are paid for the rehabilitation of the mine, but I am particularly talking about the offset. Some of the money set aside for the offset could go towards running our national parks.

Mr McCabe: That is quite a possibility. In terms of offsets, if you go to the Queensland government database for offsets there are only two listed, yet we have 50 mines in this area and 40 more proposals. They all have offsets attached to them, but no-one has a centralised database of where they are. Are they being managed? Are they under another mining lease? We have had cases in Gladstone where it was suggested to us that parts of the Fitzroy Delta intertidal areas would be an offset to the LNG industry on the hard surface of Curtis. That is not an offset; that is an area of undisturbed intertidal wetland which is completely different from the landscape on Curtis. You have to think a bit harder. It needs protection in its own right, but it is not an offset. So there is a lot of confusion and fudging in that area.

CHAIR: That is a very important point. It is something we should be actually looking at. It strictly does not come under tenure, but it is certainly one of the areas that could be attached to the tenure issue.

Mr McCabe: The other issue of tenure, of course, as I am sure you will hear from the next speakers, is: what is tenure, anyway? The only thing, in our book, that is protected from virtually everything, apart from feral pigs and horses et cetera, is national parks. Nature refuges are not protected. There is no land tenure on there. We believe there should be. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature has a series of I think four categories of nature refuge, and we think that should be adopted. Some of them are virtually national parks, with minimal activities; others can be opened for sustainable grazing, depending on their values. But those areas need protection. Biodiversity offsets need better protection. People need to know exactly what that land use may be in the next 10 or 20 years as our world changes from one industry to another, from coal to gas or from gas to something else. People cannot assure us of nature protection when nothing other than national park protects a piece of land.

CHAIR: The previous submitters actually indicated that at our very back door here, in the Berserker wilderness area, there are vine scrubs, and that is true. If we want to protect the vine scrubs, that is really what we should be doing. We have all this grass area or open forest that had—I have not actually walked into the vine forest myself, but if you are going to protect the vine forest then make sure you protect the vine forest rather than have this undergrowth that has been there for five years and during the drought lights up and burns into the vine forest. I have asked other witnesses the same question: should we actually have classifications of our national parks? We have the very pristine areas that absolutely should never be touched but then move down a bit and classify them in different roles and have different levels of protection and different management styles for those different areas.

Mr McCabe: With regard to national parks, that has to be the ultimate level. The whole area is an integrated system, including those fringing grassland areas which might be where the fires and pigs come from. If we went to that model, we would go back to what we used to call the doughnut model of national parks. I was involved in the letter writing in the 1970s for Blackdown Tableland National Park, which was formerly a forest area for the blackdown stringybark et cetera. In the past, national parks may have simply been the scenic rim. The scenic rim might be nice to look at or have a picnic at, but it is not an ecologically in-tact system. The national park would need its fringing areas, the grassland—

CHAIR: Like a buffer area.

Mr McCabe: Buffer areas that will and can burn and are adapted to those fire management regimes, but those areas are a buffer. So you cannot just take the scenic areas or the bits of high ecological value because you end up with a little, tiny missing jigsaw puzzle. Particularly when we do not know whether we are going to get a wet or a dry in the next 10, 20 or 100 years, we need to provide nature with the opportunity to move. If you have a 100-metre-wide buffer because it is burnt out every year, that may prevent a species interbreeding et cetera and moving between the areas if they have to and that species may die out. Certain species of birds will die out and the eucalypts may die because they are the species that ate the thrips. They are the sorts of things we barely understand enough. So it has to be whole-of-ecosystem protection, rather than just the scenic bits or just the really high ecological bits. That seems to be the focus at the moment.

CHAIR: I was not advocating that we decline the value of it. What I was saying was that you have your whole national park but there should be areas that are absolutely pristine and should remain that way and other areas that may have better involvement with humans. They might be the areas we can actually do the ecotours through and so on.

Mr McCabe: That is certainly possible. In Mount Isa it would be a great possibility. There are great walking trails. The previous speakers used to run the five mountains tour, where you could do the five peaks in one day. I do not know if we are all up to that nowadays, but in terms of turning that into a commercial thing that would be a problematic area. I think the commercial value is in the grey nomads and green nomads and the people who travel through an area who have their tinnie and go fishing but enjoy the picnic area on the national parks. They spend money at the local shops et cetera. That, to me, is the major value and maybe we put a cost on it. Maybe I would not resent paying an extra \$5 on my permit to go to Blackdown to drive my car in. I am not an economist, but someone could do some modelling around that, about just a little bit more levy on the national parks. My bushwalking friends will probably get me later

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for saying that, but if I go to Tasmania I am expected to buy a \$20 day permit or a \$100 week permit to actually drive my car in there. If I do not drive a car, I can take the bus or pay the ecotourist mob to take me in.

CHAIR: I think the prime example is the south island of New Zealand. If there were not tourists on the south island I think they would just about close the gate and walk away. There is very little else, within reason. Tourism and the natural environment is a big industry.

Mr HART: You mentioned that you would like to see the conditions of leases maintained and strengthened. Can you give us an idea of how you would like to see them strengthened, in particular Delbessie leases and whether you think they go far enough?

Mr McCabe: Delbessie is a great example of nature conservation and sustainable grazing. That should be a minimum standard for how leases are managed and how future potential transfer to freehold is managed. I did not do any preparation on Delbessie—I have some documents where we would like to see that pushed a bit further—but that is a pretty good model to start with. As long as the Delbessie level standard is met in transfer and some sort of scientific monitoring and management—many landholders nowadays monitor and measure regrowth and grass growth and soil health as part of their sustainable grazing. If that is built into a transfer, that is something I think we could talk in detail about.

In terms of some examples, I will just mention Great Keppel Island because it is in the news at the moment. For 30-odd years we have had a campaign to ensure that, whether it is TIA or Mercure or the current owners, they meet their conditions for feral goats, lantana, rubber vine, fire management and erosion. There is always a draft environmental management plan and it is never policed and never implemented. It is always in draft—essentially, we would argue, for 30 years. No-one has ever met the lease conditions. Occasionally someone gets a smack on the wrist for knocking down a tree, but there is no real management of those requirements under lease conditions. There needs to be a strengthening of that. Likewise, people argue in despair about fining the mines more for discharging water into the river. There needs to be much better compliance with the lease conditions, or eventually freehold conditions.

Mr KATTER: We have touched on it before but, since we have raised Delbessie, I will ask. I do not have all the details on this example. All I know is that there is a grazing family from my neck of the woods who were one of the first graziers out in that area, so that would be at least 100 years. I feel they have been very respectful of the land. They are overwhelmed by some of the initiatives of Delbessie, with taking photos every year at spots on their place in some remote areas. I would say they are in a much better position than a lot of others. To me, that raises the issue of the viability of it all. To me, that is pretty strong feedback: if someone who is in a pretty good financial position is battling with the conditions of it, there has to be a point where you would acknowledge the viability or the practicality of these solutions. I know they sat down originally but now it is working and they can see what impact it is having on their operations. How does that fit in with where you are coming from?

Mr McCabe: There have been massive advances in remote sensing, whether it is the regular satellite imagery that you can download or access through your local NRM group like the Fitzroy Basin Association. \$200 will buy you a remote-sensing camera or you can have photos emailed to you or you build it in as part of your normal monitoring. They are not boundary riding, I guess, nowadays.

I guess I am using anecdotal stuff that has been told to me—and these are people from the Gulf Country—where people have said, 'We have done some of this stuff and it was a bit hard to get into it, but we are finding we are getting better production now by doing these things. We were looking at our grass condition but we are looking at the regrowth and we are even getting BirdLife Australia to pop out now and then and do a bit of a bird study,' because that is a bit of an indicator. If you have good bird populations you have good insect populations, there are flowering plants, there is good healthy soil. So people are integrating that into their management plans to a larger degree.

I respect the fact that for some of those very large holdings out west it may be difficult, but satellite imagery and remote sensing I think are improving. I think people are seeing a production outcome to make it worth their time to consider the nature conservation aspect. Some of those people are saying to me, 'If I go and talk to the Christensens down the road here or the Tysons from Rolleston, they show you photos of their country and their wetlands and their Queensland bluegrass. They occasionally show a picture of their cattle.' So they are really passionate greenies.

CHAIR: Thanks very much, Michael. We really appreciate you coming in this morning. That was a very interesting submission. Thank you very much.

Mr McCabe: Thank you.

REA, Ms Joanne, Chair, Property Rights Australia

CHAIR: Would you like to make an opening statement?

Ms Rea: I want to thank the committee for allowing me to speak here today. With regard to the topic, one of the major problems rural industry has had in the last few years is the presence of activists within departments who often administer the law and policy as they wish it were written rather than as passed by parliament. The Land Act 1994 and Delbessie Agreement say that desirable grasses should be perennial, preferential and productive. It is therefore unacceptable that landholders are reporting that inspectors are often interested only in native grasses during their inspections. We have also seen on numerous occasions the discrimination against buffel which, by any reading of the act, is a highly desirable grass.

The time taken to renew a lease by the department's own estimate is at least two years. This is costly for both lessee and government. In the urban setting, where we are told the return on investment is greater, there would be few takers for such treatment. It is unrecognised that urban leases are generally close to or are business ready. Rural lessees are responsible for their own improvements. Surely a quick inspection by an experienced DEEDI officer should be able to determine if the land is in good condition and does not require a full inspection—80 pages of guidelines. Lessees should be notified immediately that their lease will be renewed for a significant period or that they have the option of upgrading to a perpetual lease or to freeholding. One wonders, however, whether freeholding is or should be an attractive option for everybody with so many mining tenements over the state and few rights in excess of leasehold land. It seems to have become common practice for lessees to be expected to give up some of their land for future conservation areas, regardless of merit. This is particularly the case for those who wish to convert to freehold. This is not acceptable. The reduction of land available for rural activity and reduction of possible intensification of rural industry has been a significant contributor to loss of profitability.

The requirement for landowners to be responsible for the integrity of future conservation areas on pain of severe penalty—much more than the mining companies seem to be facing, I must say—based on desktop studies is particularly distressing to Property Rights Australia. Our experience with the Vegetation Management Act has shown that maps and desktop studies are hugely inaccurate. The state has in the past fallen far short of being a model litigant in their treatment of farmers. Understanding of factors outside of the control of landowners, mistakes in desktop studies and lack of judgement are only the tip of the iceberg in the unfair treatment of rural constituents. If a future nature conservation area has not been ground truthed at time of inspection, prosecution for not husbanding the mythical flora and fauna within it is unacceptable.

The government, not individual landowners, should be responsible for resolving native title issues which complicate upgrading of leases and lengthening of terms of leases. Farmers have been made responsible for dealing with all the issues outside urban areas that no-one else wishes to deal with, at great cost to themselves and their businesses. All of the many and varied requirements of society cannot continue to be heaped on the shoulders of the rural community. Outside responsibility and distraction stunts business creativity, adoption of updated technology and productivity increases, adds extra cost, causes stress and has caused the next generation of farmers to shy away from the industry. Farming in Australia under Australian conditions is not an unskilled job. It takes a lifetime to hone the skills. Agricultural colleges are closing, but even that is only an internship. We will face a shortage of farmers if policy settings do not swing back in favour of the attainment of profitability sooner rather than later. Rural industry is a price taker and the idea that environmental services can be priced into prices of produce in a free market system is pure economic pie in the sky. Thank you.

CHAIR: Thanks very much, Joanne. I asked one of the submitters in the last couple of days about land management, particularly in north Australia where the operation is for young cattle to go off the property, and obviously the live export trade was cut off suddenly. Therefore, you could be running your property extremely well, meeting all of the conditions of Delbessie and one stroke of the pen by a government department took away your ability to roll your cattle out of the property so that you then faced a position where you were actually overstocked and you had no means of moving those cattle on. Property owners are actually forced in some circumstances, either by drought or fire or by government decision, to be in a situation where their Delbessie conditions are just run into the ground, so to speak. Obviously that is an impact on grazing et cetera. The other thing of course is the ability for a lot of the pastoral leases not to be able to grow their own fodder. Would you just like to comment on that?

Ms Rea: I think it is a problem if pastoral leases cannot grow their own fodder. I think that that is a very outdated and old-fashioned idea that they should not be allowed to do so. Basically, you are talking about being overstocked for a short period. I actually think that governments and government departments should be understanding when people are overstocked for a short-term period, whether it is just in the process of destocking during a drought or deciding whether you are going to destock. I do not think that they should be discriminated against for that. I have heard from landowners that they have been discriminated against in the length of term of their lease because they were under drought conditions. This is supposed to be allowed for, but I think that probably some of the inspectors are not as experienced as others and do not know how to allow for that condition.

One landowner I spoke to said that a very experienced DEEDI officer had said, 'Yes, I think you should have no trouble getting a 40-year lease.' That officer then went on sick leave or retired or something and was replaced by someone else who was much younger and the landowner was only Rockhampton

offered a 30-year lease, and he believes he was discriminated against because he was in drought conditions. The theory is all very nice. Probably in drought conditions or under any sort of conditions that are outside the control of the landowner, I think departments just have to have some understanding. I think probably there also needs to be a recognition that these places are pretty resilient. If it is only a temporary setback, the land recovers amazingly quickly.

CHAIR: I will just explore that a little bit further, and I will give the opportunity for members of the committee to ask you further questions. In respect of the issue that a government made a decision to curtail live export and then there was no option for landholders to actually pay their banks and because of that the banks went in and revalued those properties because of their limited ability to generate an income, there are a lot of properties through north Australia, particularly in Queensland, that are insolvent right at this time. Delbessie aside, do you believe that there is an obligation on behalf of a government in considering some of the jurisdiction they have in terms of those sorts of decisions? Irrespective of tenure—even though we are looking at tenure—certainly the effect of that decision has almost destroyed the ability of a lot of those graziers to actually get out of debt.

Ms Rea: It is certainly a dire situation. I just think that that was an illustration of sovereign risk that until that point in time I thought would never exist in this country. Ari Onassis once said, 'You can have everything right in your business settings, but if governments do something to destroy your business there is nothing that you can do,' and it is true. There is nothing you can do. As for state governments, it needs to be up to the government what they do as far as things like that. It is really outside the scope of an individual or a small organisation to come up with a solution to that without some guidelines.

CHAIR: The point I am making is that it really does not matter what tenure you have. If something like a government decision impacts to that extent on the ability of your property to earn its way—and most properties are only on about a two per cent return anyway—you are destroyed anyway. You do not need to make a statement on that, but I am sure some other committee members would like to ask questions.

Mr HART: Joanne, thanks for your presentation. We heard everything you said. Can I just ask you about the conflict that exists between the Land Act and the Delbessie Agreement with regard to encroachment. Have you got any specific examples of that or general examples of that that you could tell us about?

Ms Rea: The Land Act itself says it should be kept free of encroachment of woody weeds—namely, things like turkey bush, false sandalwood and stuff like that I am presuming, but particularly turkey bush. As written in the Delbessie Agreement, it says free of encroachment and I believe that some departmental officers have reclassified buffel grass as a woody weed for the purposes of policing it. That is the example that I have. The other example that I have is in the treatment of turkey bush where we had a Charleville grazier, who is a resident of Rockhampton, who has been charged with illegal tree clearing because he was clearing turkey bush because he failed to recognise that he might need a permit to clear it. In terms of some of the evidence given, he was made to look like an environmental vandal because he attempted unsuccessfully to plant buffel grass, which is not an illegal grass. In fact, it is a highly productive grass and fulfils all of the conditions of the Delbessie Agreement. He was getting rid of turkey bush. There were also comments made that he had in the process knocked over some immature trees. There is a size limit to the trees. Immature trees usually are not considered to be a huge problem. In fact, he now has a permit for exactly the same sort of operation. So it was a technical breach and he has been fined \$110,000 plus another \$13,000 in various costs. We have instances of mines that have created much more environmental damage than that and done much worse things and been fined \$2,000 or something.

Mr HART: With regard to the ILUAs or the nature conservation agreements, you are talking about some sort of standard government sponsored agreement. Have you got an idea in what sort of form?

Ms Rea: Indigenous land use agreement?

Mr HART: Yes.

Ms Rea: It is always possible to have a template where maybe certain conditions can be negotiated one side or the other. You have a submission by somebody in your submissions list who says they wanted to freehold a very tiny corner of their land and the department valued it at \$3,000-odd and he was prepared to pay the \$3,000-odd, but identifying the native title holders was difficult. When they finally did come up with someone, they wanted \$60,000 to freehold it. That sort of thing should not be necessary or even able to happen. If it is not for a culturally robust purpose with the funds being put to a robust cultural purpose, it should not be possible to do that. I am also saying that governments need to be a bit more responsible. Why do landholders need to sit down at a table for month after month after month? Landholders do not have time to do that so that they can get 10 years more on their lease or something or they can upgrade their lease. Some of these problems that need to be sorted out are government problems. They should not be the problems of individuals.

Mr HART: So do you think there should be like a fixed cost or a fixed process for this rather than a floating process?

Ms Rea: There was a template land agreement put out for the mining companies. I do not think many people use it and I think it has been pretty well panned, but it would be a starting point. When you cannot identify native title holders, I think maybe the process should lapse.

CHAIR: If they cannot identify them?

Ms Rea: If they cannot identify them as proper native title holders.

Mr YOUNG: Joanne, what we are talking about with the ILUAs was mentioned in some of the submissions from Cape York. They are in agreement with what you are saying.

CHAIR: Bill, have you got a question?

Mr BYRNE: I probably have a few. What is your membership?

Ms Rea: It is something we do not usually disclose but probably in the order of 500 enterprises, not individuals. We have members in every single state including Tasmania. Most of them are in Queensland, though.

Mr BYRNE: Do you accept the notion of global warming?

CHAIR: That is outside the terms of reference.

Ms Rea: That is a personal question.

Mr BYRNE: It leads directly to the idea of land tenure and protection—

Mr HART: Mr Chair, I think that is outside the scope—

Mr BYRNE: —so I would like to know what your view is of the implications of that issue.

CHAIR: I will disallow that, Bill. I think that is outside the scope of land tenure.

Ms Rea: If you are talking about land clearing, I have not mentioned the term today at all.

CHAIR: I think it is beyond Ms Rea's expertise to give an opinion on global warming.

Mr BYRNE: In terms of decision making, then, I note that you talk about the 'nightmare of laws imposed by the former government' and unscientifically based decision making et cetera.

Ms Rea: Absolutely and I can defend all of those statements.

Mr BYRNE: I would like to get your opinion about what your idea of decision making is on properties and whether you believe precautionary principles are relevant?

Ms Rea: In light of what has happened with the mining industry and what it has managed to get away with, I would say now definitely, yes. We have been discriminated against. If you want to know about science or lack of science, just take the claims that farmers and graziers are damaging the reef. That was based on nothing scientific. It was based on somebody's assertion that the bigger landholders were going to be the bigger polluters and that it was caused by tree clearing, which is not necessarily the case. Trees are not cleared and country left bare. It is usually planted with grass.

I would like to draw your attention to the submission by Blair and Josie Angus in which they did a study and showed the difference between a totally ungrazed, unmanaged block and one that had been cleared, stick raked and grazed and one that had regrowth on it and the biomass of the grasses, and it was something like 200-fold extra biomass in the one that had been stick raked. So the idea that extra erosion or erosion is caused by tree clearing is patently ridiculous.

Mr BYRNE: So you put to this committee that agriculture in all of its various forms has no and had no impact on the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Is that what you are saying to us?

Ms Rea: I am saying that it has been hugely exaggerated, as have many of the claims of many of the more radical green movements. They talk about the plume out to the ocean. The plumes have been going out to the ocean during times of huge rainfall for thousands and thousands of years, long before we were here. People talk about the damage to the coral, but there are species such as crustaceans and some of the fish that actually thrive on what goes out to the Great Barrier Reef in those plumes. There is more sediment stirred up from the bottom of the ocean by the natural movement in the Great Barrier Reef than ever comes from the rivers. I think we have been really well and truly duded on that one.

Mr BYRNE: I find that an extraordinary set of statements, frankly, and not based on any reality—

Ms Rea: I find the arguments put by the green groups over the Great Barrier Reef protection extraordinary.

Mr BYRNE: They are not green groups. They are credentialled people. You are entitled to your opinion, thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you, Bill. As there are no further questions, thank you very much for attending today. We appreciate your attendance today.

BARTLETT, Mr Daniel, Representative, Central Queensland University

ELMS, Mr Martin, Representative, Central Queensland University

CHAIR: Before you start, Martin, I move that we accept the submission by the Central Queensland University.

Mr HART: I second the motion.

CHAIR: The committee is in favour of that.

Mr Elms: Thanks for the opportunity to put forward our case today. I am mindful of the fact that the committee has to catch a bus to Emerald so I will try to be as brief as possible. I wanted to come here today to relay the experiences we have had as an education provider with the various land tenure arrangements we have in place over some of our campuses, particularly the campuses that operate under a deed of grant in trust, or DOGIT, land tenure arrangement with the state government but more so the opportunities that could be there for the university and the community if there were a conversion of that land tenure arrangement to a freehold arrangement.

The CQ University has 12 campuses in locations from Cairns right down through Central Queensland, the south-east of the state, Melbourne, Sydney and a research institute in Adelaide. You will find we have a mix of leases, DOGIT land tenure arrangements and freehold operating across those campuses. The ones I want to talk about today are our Bundaberg and Rockhampton campuses, both of which operate under a DOGIT land tenure arrangement. That has served us well over the years. Anything that we want to do on those two campuses that fall within the pretty strict parameters of university business with an educational purpose we have no problems doing. We do not encounter any sort of resistance. If we want to build laboratories or classrooms or student accommodation, they were built with no problems.

Where we run into some frustration on those campuses is when we try to do anything that falls outside the boundaries of university business and for an educational purpose. Anything that might be entrepreneurial or have a commercial enterprise nature to it, or anything that includes a partnership with a community group or with a business or industry is where we run into all sorts of resistance under our DOGIT land tenure arrangements. That is where universities are going these days. More and more universities, especially ours which has the aspiration to do so, are moving away from the traditional campus model where there are high walls around your campus and it is strictly education inside. You will see a lot of universities now quite successfully incorporating community groups, businesses and industries within their campuses. The university village concept is one which we are quite geared towards.

I will give some examples at our Bundaberg campus, for instance. The AEIOU Foundation is a not-for-profit, early intervention autism service provider. It wanted to build its new facility in Bundaberg on our campus. We wanted to have the foundation on our campus because we see obvious educational links with our education students, giving them exposure to young kids with autism so when they go out into the workplace it is not a foreign concept to them and they know they can deal with kids with autism more effectively, but also allied health students and postgrad researchers who can build to the body of knowledge about what we know about autism.

DERM could not see the educational purpose to that. It was not a pure educational purpose. As a result, this proposal has been locked up in red tape for months and months and it still is not built yet. That is not a slight on DERM. It is executing its duties to within the letter of the law, which is exactly what any of us would expect of them, but it is a good example of the delays and the disruptions to a service like that. Anyone who has worked with autistic kids knows there is a very small window of opportunity where you can get to these kids, and that is the difference between these kids going to a mainstream school or special school. It was pretty frustrating to watch that project being delayed knowing there were kids who were moving outside of that window.

I will give you an example on our Rockhampton campus. Central Queensland Indigenous Development Ltd is an Indigenous employment and welfare service provider. A few years ago it required a new location as it was having trouble finding a suitable location in Rockhampton. It had a grant of a few million dollars from the Commonwealth government to build it. We were delighted that we offered CQID to build it on our land. Something we are trying to achieve is greater participation, exposure and greater access to Indigenous people in this community to higher education. We saw that as a perfect fit so we invited them to build their facility on the campus. Again, because of our land tenure arrangements that was a very drawn-out, frustrating and costly—almost prohibitive—process. There were significant delays and disruptions to CQID services, because there were no pure educational purposes with that building.

Another example is from the Rockhampton campus. The Rockhampton Cycling Club approached the university to build a racing track at the university. It was going to provide the funding and we just had to provide the land. The club wanted to use that for its racing, training, rehabilitation, child safety cycling programs and incorporate skateboarding and that sort of thing. We thought that was a great idea. We are trying to bring more people from the community into the campus, but we cannot entertain those sorts of ideas with the current land tenure arrangements that we have. It would just be a nightmare so unfortunately that is something that is lost to the university. More importantly, it is lost to the community, too.

A similar approach was made from a running group in Rockhampton which wanted to build a five-kilometre cross-country running circuit through the bushland on our Rockhampton campus. For those who have not been to our Rockhampton campus, it is massive. It is quite a large campus. Our footprint is only tiny. It is only in one corner. There is quite a lot of bushland there and lots of land available.

Hopefully those examples from our Rockhampton and Bundaberg campuses illustrate the point I am trying to make about the restrictions we face and the prohibitive arrangements that come with those land tenure arrangements. To contrast that to our Mackay campus, which operates on freehold land, we have the autonomy and freedom to build virtually whatever we want. Ted, you have seen our Mackay campus. It has been a construction site for the last two or three years. There is not much that stops us putting up what we want. One of the most exciting things that is going up now is a major regional sporting precinct that is being developed. It is in the detailed planning stage right now. It has the financial backing of council and industry, and it includes things like an athletics track, an Olympics aquatic centre, a sports facility, sports fields and even an Olympic ice rink. We would never dream of putting that on either the Rockhampton or Bundaberg campuses. We would never attempt it because it would be far too prohibitive and restrictive. That is, I guess, an example of what we do with campuses that are on freehold.

Going back to the model that we aspire to bring in for Rockhampton and Bundaberg of engaging the community and incorporating it more into our campuses, Rockhampton and Bundaberg are both two cities with I think less than 25 per cent of higher education participation from school leavers. Compare that to a city like Brisbane where it is more than 40 per cent. A lot of that is because we are stuck out in the corner of town. There are people in this city, as Bill and Bruce would know, who have lived here their whole lives and have never set foot on the campus and do not know what is there. We would love to break down those barriers to higher education participation and bring it back to something that is more on par with metropolitan kids by opening up the campus and embracing that university village model that so many universities are doing now.

There are universities out there, for instance, that have commercial centres with law firms in it so their law students can get some practical work experience on the campus. There are aged-care facilities and a hospice for nursing students and allied health students who work in and out of them. There are theatres for performing art students and galleries for visual arts students. In our case, when we were in the process of trying to merge with the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE, restaurants for TAFE students to work in and commercial hairdressing salons—

CHAIR: I think we get the idea.

Mr Elms: Sorry, I will wrap it up.

CHAIR: How many hectares are on the site roughly?

Mr Elms: I would only be guessing. Maybe I will take that on notice.

CHAIR: I am just trying to get an idea of the size of the footprint. What tenure do you think would most suit the university?

Mr Elms: Freehold.

CHAIR: Even though it might trigger compensation?

Mr Elms: Again, I will take that on notice and get back to you with what our view is on that. I am not best placed to answer that question, but it has been the university's ambition to achieve freehold, at least over a portion of the land if not all of it, so we do have the autonomy.

CHAIR: We have been dealing with DOGITs in the gulf and in the peninsula so it is not just confined to the cape. There are other DOGITs around as well—yours, for instance. Are there any questions from the committee?

Mr YOUNG: I have a quick statement. Martin, you have put your submission into this planning committee. Can I also suggest that you hand your submission to Ian Walker.

Mr Elms: We will do that. Thanks for that advice.

CHAIR: Are there any other questions? Bill, have you got any questions of the university? Bill is the local member of parliament.

Mr BYRNE: No.

CHAIR: Thank you very much for coming and presenting to us. We really appreciate it. It gives another perspective on, and brings another complexity to, the land tenure system in Queensland that we are dealing with.

That completes our hearing in Rockhampton. The committee has gained valuable information to assist us in the inquiry into the future and continued relevance of government tenure of land across Queensland. I would like to thank Hansard. The *Hansard* will be available to be downloaded from the government website in the near future. I move that pursuant to section 50(2) (a) of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 the committee authorise for publication the public evidence given before the committee here today.

Mr YOUNG: I second the motion.

CHAIR: I declare the meeting closed.

Committee adjourned at 12.44 pm