



Speech by

HOWARD HOBBS

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

Hansard 27 August 1998

WHARPS PASTORAL HOLDING; MAHOGANY GLIDER HABITAT

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—NPA) (2.15 a.m.): I refer to Minister Welford's ill-informed accusation of interference by me and other former Ministers in the Government's acquisition of the Wharps Pastoral Holding near Ingham. That was the worst case of abuse of land-holders by bureaucrats that I have seen in this State. The Hobbs have owned that property since 1936. One thousand hectares of that land was resumed in 1990 for cane production. Since 1990, the property has been virtually frozen by the Department of Environment. Since then the mahogany gliders have become an issue. Tree clearing has devalued the property.

The Government has devalued that property since the original negotiations were undertaken with the land-holders. No agreement could be reached. The people came to see me and also the former Minister for Environment, Brian Littleproud, at Parliament House. I mention at this stage that the Hobbsses are no relations of mine. I did not meet them until they came down here to see me. The Government offered them the retention of 150 hectares of the 10,900 hectares of the property. Eventually that figure increased to 450 hectares. Now Minister Welford has offered them 315 hectares of their 10,900 hectares.

Consultant John Young has said that up to 3,000 hectares could be used. The Hobbsses want only 1,000 hectares. One tenth of their property is all that they are seeking. If they got that, they would be reasonably happy. That would be a win/win situation for everybody. That would be a mahogany glider area of 9,900 hectares, and there would be very little money for the Government to pay out. Of course, the Hobbsses would be satisfied with that. I do not see any reason why that cannot be done.

We have done what we can and reject entirely the gutless attack by the Minister——

Time expired.
