



Speech by

Mr L. SPRINGBORG

MEMBER FOR WARWICK

Hansard 5 August 1998

SPORTING SHOOTERS

Mr SPRINGBORG (Warwick—NPA) (6.41 p.m.): I rise to support the original motion moved in this place by the honourable member for Keppel and to speak against the proposed amendment. My very great concern is that the amendment as moved by the Honourable the Minister and seconded by the member for Nicklin, Mr Wellington, significantly weakens the original motion put forward by the honourable member for Keppel, which calls on the Government to honour a commitment previously made by me—a commitment which was being investigated by the process first put in place by former Minister Hobbs.

The Minister for Natural Resources, Mr Welford, made it very clear in this place on 4 August that he is reviewing the issues surrounding this ministerial panel. Tonight we need to be very clear—we need to be absolutely unequivocal—about the motion to be passed. If the member for Nicklin or any other member supports the weakening of this particular motion and the result is equivocation and procrastination on this issue, then the concerns of the people who are vitally affected by this issue will be laid fairly and squarely on their shoulders. At the end of the day, it needs to be clear and unequivocal that we support the original, strong motion moved by the honourable member for Keppel, the shadow Minister for Natural Resources.

Recently the Minister made much about the issue of legal advice. Today he restated that there was legal advice. At no time did I as Minister receive any legal advice on this matter. The advice which came to me related to general departmental reticence, because we were travelling into a new area about which the department had some concerns. It was concerned about potential political problems arising out of this issue. The Minister knows that there are absolutely no legal problems whatsoever with this proposal. It is a matter of: where there is a will there is a way.

We knew that there would be a number of matters of concern to be addressed as we went down this track. That was no excuse for not forging ahead to assist these gun clubs, pistol clubs, rifle clubs—whatever the case may be—to find new land. Many of these clubs have tried to find their own land. They have had leases in the past. They have also bought their own freehold land. In some cases it was simply a matter of adding a small piece of what might have been Crown land to the end of an existing rifle range to ensure that there was sufficient area so that they could comply with the current regulations for rifle ranges. So there was a combination of possible solutions.

I know that there are a lot of difficulties. I never hid that fact. I know that there were native title issues. With all due respect to the Minister, we had representatives from the Premier's Department, from the Department of Environment, from the Office of Sport and Recreation and a number of other departments because there were many issues to go through. However, those exact same issues had to be traversed even if a club went out and purchased its own piece of freehold land or leased from somebody else—perhaps with the exception of the issue of native title, and that may or may not have applied in all of the cases. That was one of the issues, but that issue in itself was not insurmountable.

I was very concerned that we did do something, because a solution had been promised for a long time. It was something that was required to make sure that these people had their needs met. These people have done absolutely the right thing by complying with the spirit of the new gun laws in joining sporting clubs and making sure that they had safe and disciplined shooting environments. I set about addressing the problem.

I call upon the Minister and members opposite to ensure that this Parliament passes an unequivocal motion, the one put forward by the honourable member for Keppel. Bob Carr in New South Wales has gone down this same track. A number of sites—Cessnock, Batemans Bay and other sites around Armidale—are being looked at to address exactly the same situation we are talking about here in Queensland.

Time expired.
