



Speech by

Mr L. SPRINGBORG

MEMBER FOR WARWICK

Hansard 27 August 1998

WHARPS PASTORAL HOLDING

Mr SPRINGBORG (Warwick—NPA) (2.25 a.m.): This morning in this Parliament one of the Parliament's great conspiracy theorists, the member for Everton, made some absolutely outrageous, clearly wrong and unsubstantiated attacks on me with regard to Wharps Pastoral Holding in north Queensland. I would like to place on the record quite clearly for this Parliament that the Hobbses, as has been alluded to by the honourable member for Warrego, have been treated absolutely appallingly. On 28 April, they came to see me with their solicitor to discuss their situation. That meeting was attended by my director-general, Mr Tom Fenwick, and also my policy adviser.

The member for Everton indicated that the Minister for Environment at the time, Mr Littleproud, was at that meeting. He has misled the House; Mr Littleproud was not at the meeting at all. The member for Hinchinbrook, Mr Rowell, as Mr Hobbs' local member, actually attended that meeting and that was in the form of an introduction.

I would like to say that at that meeting I indicated quite clearly to Mr Hobbs that I understood the very difficult situation in which he found himself and undertook to do what I could as Minister for Natural Resources to overcome the years of heartache and distress and personal concern that this was causing him and his family. During the course of that meeting it was indicated that they may be able to draft a submission that I could consider and take to Cabinet. I said that I would look at it but that we would have to consider a whole heap of other legal issues as well before we could even look at taking that submission before Cabinet. I indicated quite clearly to them that there might be a possibility that the 450 hectares of land could be freeholded because it had been largely cleared or touched in the past, but that there was a problem with the other 550 hectares, which could have some native title consequences. I acted very properly in this case and every due process was followed by the department and me.
