



Speech by

## **Hon. V. LESTER**

### **MEMBER FOR KEPPEL**

---

Hansard 6 August 1998

#### **MILLERS TIMBER YARD, COOKTOWN**

**Hon. V. P. LESTER** (Keppel—NPA) (10.11 a.m.): I refer to the plight of Millers Timber Yard at Cooktown. In September 1997, it applied for a permit for Timber Reserve 165. After considerable delay, because various groups wanted to have an input about environmental aspects, the Minister gave permission for a permit to be issued for these people to start operating in early July. On 30 July, a notice to cease operations was issued. The next day, the Minister found out that he could not tell them to cease operations, as he had already given them a permit. The Minister then came back and said that they had to at least volunteer to cease operations for a period of 21 days. Millers Timber Yard found out that it did not really have to do that, and so it has continued operating in a limited capacity.

In a press statement, the Minister said that rare species were threatened and that is why the operation cannot proceed. However, the Minister did not have any evidence of that, because mining and grazing activities have gone on there and the area is not pristine. Why did the Minister allow a permit early in July and then try to take it away later, only to find out that he could not do so? He has not even offered compensation. What about the jobs of these people? Does he not care about that? Does he not know what he is doing? Will he continue to dither all the time? He does not know what he is doing from one day to the next. What on earth will happen to the other timber operators in the area? They have licences. Will theirs be taken away? The Minister should not be laughing about this. This is a serious business. What will the Minister do to reassure timber operators that they will be okay?

Time expired.

---