



Speech by

**GRANT MUSGROVE**

**MEMBER FOR SPRINGWOOD**

---

Hansard 30 November 1999

### **TREE-CLEARING GUIDELINES**

**Mr MUSGROVE** (Springwood—ALP) (6.40 p.m.): In moving this motion tonight the Opposition has reached new heights of hypocrisy. Members opposite need to be well aware that Queensland is awake to their cheap stunts. Our primary producers talk openly about the way the Opposition when in Government failed them, how it looked after its mates and left the average primary producers to fend for themselves. When this motion is voted upon on the floor of this House tonight, members opposite have the opportunity to show Queenslanders how they really care about rural Queensland. The people of Queensland will know what they really stand for.

Those opposite had their chance and they blew it. They blew it on 5 November 1997, when they signed the partnership agreement with the Commonwealth Government to allow for the release of Natural Heritage Trust funds to Queensland. That agreement committed the Queensland Government to "reverse the long-term decline in the quality and extent of Australia's native vegetation cover". Tonight we hear members opposite saying there is no problem. We hear them talking about regrowth. They signed up on the basis that there was a problem. I will continue to quote from this document.

**Mr Lucas:** They don't like it.

**Mr MUSGROVE:** They do not like it one little bit. It states that they committed to put "effective measures in place to retain and manage vegetation, including controls on clearing". Opposition members come into this place tonight and say that it has to be voluntary, but they signed up. Who signed up? Messrs Borbidge, Hobbs and Littleproud signed up to mandatory tree-clearing guidelines for the State of Queensland in 1997, yet they have the sheer hypocrisy to come into this place and move this disgraceful motion.

By signing that agreement they agreed to introduce controls on clearing. What did they do? They hoped it would go away. This is just like the RFA. When was it due to all come good? The deal was done. The work was done. It was all bubbling up. We were all ready to take action. It was due one month after the State election. But rather than make a decision, the then Government called a State election, because that was an easier decision. And we know what a smart move that was.

The facts speak for themselves. It is left up to this Government to take the hard decisions in the interests of all Queenslanders. Only the Beattie Labor Government and this Minister will make the decisions the former Government never had the intestinal fortitude to make.

I am happy to acknowledge that the member for Warrego set up a committee with a fancy name—the Regulatory Framework Task Force for Vegetation Management—but what did it achieve? Nothing! The honourable member for Surfers Paradise acknowledged that he set it up 48 hours after signing the agreement. What did he do for the rest of the term? Nothing!

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I am happy to answer the honourable member's question.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! It is not a question and answer time. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to resume his seat.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** It was a very successful task force. All the work was done. All they had to do was follow through.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Resume your seat!

**Mr MUSGROVE:** We on this side of the House know what the member intended to achieve. Nothing! How do we know this? Ever since this Government established the Vegetation Management Advisory Council the Opposition criticised the idea from go to whoa. Those on the other side of the House stand and blame this Government for panic clearing. Who should we blame for panic clearing? It is the Deputy Leader of the National Party, who puts out press release after press release trying to scare well-meaning primary producers into clearing their trees. He created this crisis, not this Government.

Now is the chance for the Opposition to make good. It should support this motion and support the call for \$100m from the Federal Government to give us a hand. Those opposite should not be lap dogs of Canberra. They should stand up for Queensland and for the primary producers in this State. They should support this motion or they will stand condemned in this House for the appalling stand they have taken in relation to this issue. No-one on this side of the House believes a word they have had to say in relation to this issue. They are empty vessels looking for some good ideas. They will be waiting quite some time.

---