



Speech by

**GRANT MUSGROVE**

**MEMBER FOR SPRINGWOOD**

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Hansard 10 December 1999

**VEGETATION MANAGEMENT BILL**

**Mr MUSGROVE** (Springwood—ALP) (12.07 p.m.): Anyone listening to the remarks of those opposite would have to conclude that they are just not fair dinkum. As has been pointed out in this House, those opposite signed up on controls. In November 1997 the member for Surfers Paradise signed up with the Commonwealth on tree-clearing controls for Queensland. We hear members opposite saying that the last thing the bush needs—

**Mr HOBBS:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member is misleading the House. What we signed was an agreement for bush care. Funds did come through. There is no reason why voluntary guidelines cannot be put in place.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Clark): There is no point of order.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I rise to a point of order. The comments made by the honourable member, which imply that this legislation is necessary because of an agreement that I signed, are totally untrue and offensive. I ask that those comments be withdrawn.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Springwood will withdraw.

**Mr MUSGROVE:** I withdraw. I quote the document signed by the Leader of the Opposition. That agreement committed the Queensland Government to—

"Reverse the long-term decline in the quality and extent of Australia's native vegetation cover and to have effective measures in place to retain and manage vegetation, including controls on clearing."

**Mr Borbidge:** Voluntary.

**Mr MUSGROVE:** No. I take the interjection from the Leader of the Opposition.

**A Government member:** How can you voluntarily control something?

**Mr MUSGROVE:** How can we voluntarily control something? The word is "control". The Leader of the Opposition signed up on controls. He can say, "Oh well, we need to have a voluntary system", but the member signed up on controls. The member has heard it before and he is going to hear it again, because members on this side will keep pointing out the abject hypocrisy of those opposite who walk into this place and claim, "This is draconian legislation. We were never going to do anything like this." The facts speak for themselves. The coalition signed up, but it was too hard. The then Government was facing an election. The Leader of the Opposition called an election before he did anything about this because he knew the hard yards still needed to be made. He knew it was going to be tough. He knew that people would kick up when he did that, but the reality is that the coalition signed up but we made the hard decision.

**Mr Sullivan:** When did he sign it?

**Mr MUSGROVE:** He signed it in November 1997. Fair dinkum, with their role as lap-dogs to the Nationals in the extremist campaign that has been waged, members of the Liberal Party have displayed no environmental credentials to the people of Queensland. In fact, while the Federal Liberal Party in Canberra urged Queensland to take action, its State counterparts here were saying no. Where do the Liberals actually stand on this? Their Federal counterparts are saying, "Queensland, you're the last State in the Commonwealth to do so. You haven't introduced controls."

**Mr Laming:** Springwood—that's where you won't be standing.

**Mr MUSGROVE:** Where is my wallet? I will take a bet on that.

**Mr Johnson:** I bet they do stand against you.

**Mr MUSGROVE:** I bet they do stand in Springwood, but the people of Springwood are very fond of their magnificent natural environment down there. They do not like it when the Queensland Libs sell out to the Queensland Nats. They have no respect at all for that sort of thing. People in Queensland who might be thinking of supporting the Liberal Party will know that they have absolutely no environmental credentials. What would happen if we did not pass this legislation? Queensland got \$35m last year in round figures in NHT funding. If we do not do this, Queensland is going to cop a funding cut from the Commonwealth.

**Mr Hobbs:** That is untrue. You are misleading the House.

**Mr MUSGROVE:** Take a point of order if you like.

**Mr HOBBS:** I rise to a point of order. The member is misleading the House. That funding is available. He should remember that we were the ones who wrote the document.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Clark):** There is no point of order.

**Mr MUSGROVE:** I thank Madam Deputy Speaker for her good sense. There has been a national spotlight on Queensland recently because over 80% of all land clearing in Australia occurs in this State. As I just said, we are the only State without tree-clearing controls. The Commonwealth Minister for the Environment, Senator Robert Hill, has indicated that he would make the continuing provision of Natural Heritage Trust funds conditional on the Queensland Government introducing land-clearing controls.

In a letter to the Government on 9 August this year, Senator Hill wrote, and I will quote it again because there is nothing that those on that side cannot cop more than having their own words quoted back to them—

"I believe that if we are to achieve our agreed national goal, and given the potential land degradation and loss of biodiversity in your State, we need to substantially reduce the net loss of vegetation in Queensland."

So there we go again. We have this lot opposite speaking a different language to their Federal counterparts. They have absolutely no credibility on this issue. Queenslanders will see them for the hypocrites that they are.

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