



Speech by

**Dr LESLEY CLARK**

**MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER**

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Hansard 27 May 1999

### **REGIONAL FOREST AGREEMENT**

**Dr CLARK** (Barron River—ALP) (6.50 p.m.): In common with the member for Logan, I will use the time allocated to me in the debate tonight to finish some of the points I was making when we debated this matter on Tuesday. Then I will focus some comments on the motion before the House tonight. The point I was making when I had to finish on Tuesday related to the industry forest plan. There is no way that that forest plan will be a win/win document, and the industry knows that. The positions described in that document are unacceptable to the conservation movement, as the industry well knows. On Tuesday I pointed out the lack of realism in that document, which talks about 200,000 hectares being in the reserve.

There is another element in that plan that is unacceptable to the conservation movement and it needs to be faced if we are to achieve some sort of win/win situation. That is, it is well known that the industry board here is getting leaned on by the sudden interest to create a woodchip industry here in Queensland. It is quite well known that that agenda is on the cards here, and calling woodchips green energy does not fool anybody. And as for that whole issue of so-called enhanced silviculture, the industry knows that is just not going to be acceptable to the conservation movement. So what I am saying is that we are looking for a win/win situation—and I am certainly looking for a win/win situation on the Kuranda Range road. This is a very contentious issue, and I am looking for a win/win situation, if we can find it.

Getting back to the point of the debate tonight, I would like to address the points that the member for Lockyer has made. He quite reasonably, one might say, is saying, "Let us have science in this debate, not emotion." In his previous life, before he came to this place, he was a vet. I can understand that, in relation to veterinary science, there are scientific facts on which everybody agrees. Dogs get diseases; it is there in the textbooks, and everybody agrees on that. Unfortunately, experience has taught me over many years that it is not that simple; that there is no one body of science on which everybody is going to agree. On any issue, there can be as many scientists supporting one point of view as another. It is just like lawyers.

**Mr Welford** interjected.

**Dr CLARK:** One can always find another set of scientists who will actually have a different point of view. I am sorry. I missed the Environment Minister's interjection.

**Mr Purcell:** He said: get into the lawyers.

**Dr CLARK:** No, not tonight. I will save that for another time.

Unfortunately, there is a naivety about this debate that we think that we can solve this by finding the science that is going to provide the clear-cut answer. Certainly, when I hear the member for Caboolture describing climate changes as an unproven myth, then I think he would certainly have an argument with some very well-credentialed international scientists who would have a different point of view.

**Mr Littleproud** interjected.

**Dr CLARK:** That is the point I am making. We will always find competing arguments in this. So science is not the answer that the member for Lockyer was perhaps trying to reach.

The member for Hervey Bay just showed us how unachievable the aim of the motion is, because he quite rightly pointed out that this is about the lives of people. He quite rightly pointed out that regional communities are at risk here. We cannot have this debate, and we cannot find solutions to this problem, unless we accept the emotions that people have on this issue and unless we accept the concerns, the anxieties and the visions that people have. So let us not be naive about this. Let us recognise the way the world is and the way people are.

I would like to refer to one of the masses of information that has been put out as part of this process in the social assessment report. It talks about visions.

Time expired.

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