



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard 7 December 1999

TREE-CLEARING GUIDELINES

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (6.15 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"That all words after 'calls on the Government' be deleted and replaced with—

'To ensure fair and consistent tree clearing controls on leasehold and freehold tenures in keeping with commitments given to the people of Queensland prior to the last State election, to ensure that rural productivity is placed on a long-term viable basis and that our unique biodiversity continues to thrive over much of its original range, and further that this House commends the Beattie Government for the manner in which it has consulted extensively with all stakeholders on this issue.' "

This is the most pro-bush Government that Queensland has seen since Sir Joh. We are out there looking after the bush. Consider the heritage trails that we have supported, the opening of Tarong, the extension of Tarong and the regional forest agreement. Who has been out there undermining Tarong? The Opposition! Who has been out there undermining the job security that we gave to the South Burnett? The National Party! Who has been out there undermining the heritage trails? The National Party! Who has been out there undermining the meetings I have been having with farmers? The National Party!

Do honourable members know why the National Party has been doing this? The reason is that the National Party is only interested in trying to win back votes from One Nation. Let me tell those opposite this: we will continue to sit down and talk with farmers. No matter how much the National Party hates it and tries to undermine it, we will listen to farmers because they are great Queenslanders. They have made a significant contribution to this State. No matter how the National Party tries to undermine the farmers and the bush, the Labor Government will stand by the farmers, we will stand by the bush and we will make sure that the farmers and the bush receive a fair go under my Government.

That is why I spent this afternoon sitting down with the farmers and my two Ministers, Rod Welford and Terry Mackenroth. We talked to the farmers about tree-clearing and about the future. Do honourable members know what those farmers want? They want a future for their kids and for their grandkids. That is why they want sustainability. They want land management that will protect their farms and protect their futures. My Government will stand side by side with the farmers as we protect the sustainability of their land. Let there be no doubt about it, we will work with the farmers; that is why I spent the whole afternoon in discussion with farmers.

My Government will come down with a consultative approach—a real approach—to protect farmers, their children and their children's children. That is what this is all about.

Let me turn to the issue here. The other day I received a letter from the President of the Senate, Margaret Reid, who wrote—

"The Senate notes the alarming rate in clearing of native vegetation in Queensland where every day without controls sees another 1,000 hectares destroyed with disastrous impacts on biodiversity, increased risk of salinity and other land degradation, and adding to Australia's greenhouse gas emissions."

The Senate further acknowledged the Queensland Government's intention to implement controls on clearing native vegetation and called for this to happen as a matter of urgency. The Senate has called on the Commonwealth Government to give Queensland appropriate financial assistance so that the clearing controls can be implemented effectively and quickly.

Let there be no doubt about this in this House: Senator Hill and the Senate have been pursuing, as aggressively as possible for a considerable period of time, land-clearing measures in this State. The coalition comes in here and talks about this issue while its mates in Canberra are right behind tree-clearing measures. The Liberal Party and the National Party in Canberra are right behind tree-clearing measures. That is why I received a resolution of the Senate—

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Those opposite do not like it because I am exposing their hypocrisy. Senator Hill has been behind this measure right from the beginning. Have those opposite lifted a finger to get any money for a regional forest agreement that will protect jobs in the South Burnett? No!

Today, a National Party Federal Minister is running around trying to prevent Queensland getting \$100m to subsidise farmers. We are wanting \$100m to compensate Queensland farmers. Who is out there opposing it? The National Party! Today, a Federal Minister is opposing it! In this place, the National Party and the Liberal Party are trying to prevent compensation to Queensland farmers. Tonight, I say to Queensland farmers, "We will stand with you." I will fight Senator Hill all the way down the line to get a fair deal. I want \$100m for Queensland farmers. I will fight for that. My greatest opposition, and the Government's greatest opposition, is from the National Party. Every farmer in this State should know that.
