



Speech by

PETER WELLINGTON

MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

Hansard 4 March 1999

TREE-PLANTING PARTNERSHIPS

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—IND) (7.24 p.m.): Today, at the launch of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Premier spoke about business ventures that maintained a balance between job creation and the environment. Just over two weeks ago, I joined staff from the Maroochy Shire Council and the Department of Primary Industries on an inspection of joint-venture tree-planting partnerships between private land-holders and the State Government operating in my region. I saw properties that had been neglected, abandoned and producing nothing being returned to valuable productive land. Land that was growing lantana and weeds is now growing trees to satisfy the future timber needs of our region. I witnessed the early stages of a new, environmentally friendly industry—one that can play a very important role in our region, not just today, not just tomorrow, but for many years to come.

One of the real strengths of this new industry is that, as the trees grow, so, too, do the opportunities for jobs. The multiplier effect of these trees is amazing. I thank the former Minister for Primary Industries, the member for Crows Nest, for his past support for the project. I also thank the Government for continuing with it.

One of my concerns is that I understand that the project is funded only until June this year. I support its continuation during these early days, when the aim is to show the wider community the real benefits of participating in this type of scheme. I am concerned that if the funding stops, the good work that has been put into the project over the past three years will be wasted and the opportunity for wider community involvement in a very worthy and environmentally friendly industry will be lost. But more importantly, the opportunity to be involved in creating real jobs today and real jobs for tomorrow will also be lost. I commend the Department of Primary Industries tree-planting project to the House.
