



Speech by

Hon. R. WELFORD

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

Hansard 26 August 1999

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
Community-based Land Trusts

Hon. R. J. WELFORD (Everton—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage and Minister for Natural Resources) (10.06 a.m.), by leave: It is often under appreciated that the protection of our environment, our wildlife and native plants and sustainable land use contribute to our economic welfare, jobs for Queensland and the broader quality of life of all Queenslanders. These issues are the domain of not just Government but also the entire community.

For some time now, various communities around Queensland have sought the ability to undertake conservation measures in a way that best suits their particular needs. In response to this need, the Beattie Government is proposing the establishment of a community-based land trust. To help the Government determine the community's view regarding this proposal, I have released a discussion paper to provide the opportunity for public comment.

A community-based land trust could empower private land-holders, families, the business and corporate sectors, and service and community organisations to contribute strategically to environmental values throughout our State. We envisage a non-Government, non-profit organisation that works with local groups and land-holders at their request to manage land for community benefit.

This concept has the potential to multiply the conservation benefits for Queensland. A community-based land trust could promote fundraising ventures to buy land to protect a particular value; voluntary agreements with private land-holders to protect land, water, wildlife and trees; and the donation of land, funds or human resources to achieve particular goals. It could provide protection for wildlife and native plants, areas of natural beauty and areas that have high cultural value. Such a land trust might also provide community amenities and encourage educational and scientific undertakings.

Land trusts established both interstate and overseas enjoy broad community support and involvement. They have been highly successful in undertaking conservation initiatives independently and in partnership with Governments at all levels. The proposed Queensland land trust would be run by the community, and people could become involved by becoming a trustee; being involved in fundraising for trust activities; doing voluntary work on a specific property or program; or, as a landowner, initiating an agreement with the trust to protect land.

I have been heartened by the broad support for this concept from many people and community organisations. It is important to point out that such a land trust would not compulsorily acquire land, force land-holders to enter into property management agreements or even act as a planning authority.

The discussion paper seeks community comment on the preferred model, and some of the options include the possibility of establishing a statutory body, an incorporated association or a cooperative. The community consultation period closes on 30 September and I encourage all Queenslanders to put forward their views on this important initiative to benefit our environment.
