



Speech by

Hon. R. WELFORD

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

Hansard 28 April 1999

PERFORMANCE OF MINISTERS

Hon. R. J. WELFORD (Everton—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage and Minister for Natural Resources) (6.20 p.m.): The advent of the Beattie Labor Government has been a breath of fresh air for Queensland when it comes to the management of natural resources and the environment. We are managing the State's natural assets and our environmental assets in a more responsible way than any Government in Queensland ever has.

The previous Government was a do-nothing Government for two and a half years. It achieved nothing. It ran down the Environment Department until it was a ramshackle, demoralised department that was able to contribute nothing to constructive Government. We have revitalised it. We have a new Environmental Protection Agency that is going to contribute to economic development in Queensland.

Mr Littleproud interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Western Downs!

Mr WELFORD: It is going to contribute to sustainable industries and contribute to creating new jobs and more sustainable jobs for the future.

Mr Littleproud interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Western Downs will cease interjecting.

Mr WELFORD: The new EPA will be complemented by a new Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service that will see the magnificent natural assets of our State in our national parks and protected areas presented more professionally than they ever have been before—instead of having the service run down and demoralised, as it was under the previous Government. We will be refocusing the efforts and resources of the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service to make sure that the very best of our wildlife and our environmental assets are presented to Queensland in a way in which they have never been presented before. We are going to provide the people of Queensland with a better understanding and appreciation of the magnificent natural values that our State possesses and its great biodiversity, which we should cherish for now and future generations.

We have tackled issues that the previous Government never had the courage to tackle. Let me list some of the issues that our Government has been prepared to take on, which have been sitting around for years and which the previous Government assiduously avoided. Firstly, we have developed a master plan for national parks to reallocate resources and get priorities in place. The previous Government threw money around at national parks capital works like confetti, with no sense of priorities. Most of that money was wasted, and the parks are no better off.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I rise to a point of order. The Minister is misleading the House. The Borbidge Government put in place a 10-year plan for national parks. That was the first time that had ever been done.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr WELFORD: We have also moved to address issues that the previous Government never addressed. The issue of the acquisition of land at the Bayview estate in Redlands we have now solved with the Redlands council, whereas the previous Government was dodging it and avoiding it and trying to shirk its responsibilities. We have acted to protect Portion 238 in the area of the Logan City Council.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I rise to a point of order. The Minister is misleading the House. The Government would not settle the Bayview estate because of the variation in valuations, so the Minister is misleading the House.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr WELFORD: The previous Government obviously could not resolve the issue. I have resolved it, and it is moving forward.

We have initiated a \$400,000 cleaner production partnership program, which I was proud to announce last week. I opened the second Asia-Pacific international round table on cleaner production at the Convention Centre only last week—an initiative which will see this Government and its sustainable industries division of the new EPA at the forefront of developing new, sustainable industries and jobs in Queensland. That is the constructive and economic policy approach that the new EPA will take in our State.

We have got Cape York back on track by putting in place the CYPLUS plan, which the previous Government junked. It tried to ignore and reject the involvement of indigenous people in the cape region who have been there for literally centuries. We are going to get it back on track, and we already have. We have launched the wetlands strategy for Queensland. We have opened the Daintree boardwalk, developing a Daintree strategy with a \$50,000 grant—shared with the Commonwealth—to put in place a planning study for the Daintree. We have new national parks. We have developed literally dozens of management plans which were languishing on the backburner under the previous Government.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I rise to a point of order. I want to point out that the——

Mr SPEAKER: I hope that this is not a frivolous point of order.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: It is not frivolous, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: I hope that it is not.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: There were more than 30 national park plans finished per year——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That is not a point of order, and the member knows it.

Mr WELFORD: We have completed the Moura off-stream storage. We have got the Beardmore western cell back on track after the previous Government could not solve the problem. We are weeks away from solving the St George issue, which has been sitting around for years and which the previous Government could not address.

Mr NELSON: I rise to a point of order. Why does the Minister refuse to solve the problem of valuations on the tablelands? That is one issue that he has not addressed in his wonderful speech tonight, and one that is going to cause him a hell of a lot of heartache, I can assure him.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member will resume his seat.

Mr WELFORD: We have put in place the first water compensation system in the State's history.
Time expired.
