



Speech by

Hon. R. WELFORD

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

Hansard 9 June 1999

REVOCATION OF STATE FOREST AREAS

Hon. R. J. WELFORD (Everton—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage and Minister for Natural Resources) (2.52 p.m.): I move—

- "(1) That this House agrees that the Proposal by the Governor in Council to revoke the setting apart and declaration as State forest under the Forestry Act 1959 of all those parts of State forest 154 described as Lot 1 on plan SP110633 and Lot 3 on plan SP115376 and containing in total an area of 27.9182 hectares;
be carried out; and
- (2) That Mr Speaker convey a copy of this Resolution to the Minister for submission to His Excellency the Governor in Council."

This proposal makes provision for the revocation of approximately 27 hectares from State Forest 154, which is located about 40 kilometres west of Millmerran. As members would be aware, Queensland is to be connected to the national electricity grid through construction of an interconnector which extends north and east from the border near Texas to connect the existing Queensland grid at Tarong. The interconnector route traverses part of State Forest 154 in the parish of Bulli.

Powerlink, as the constructing authority, has sought about 27 hectares of the State forest to allow for the construction and access of a substation, which is an essential component of the project. As part of the process to identify the preferred site for the substation, Powerlink has undertaken environmental, economic and social impact assessments and cultural heritage studies, and has developed environmental work plans covering erosion, flora, fauna, habitat and weed control. Investigations by my Department of Natural Resources and DPI Forestry have determined that the site has limited forest values.

I do not support the revocation of land from the forest estate for alternative uses unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there is no alternative site available for the purpose and that the proposed usage is in the broader public interest. In relation to this proposal, I am satisfied, firstly, that the proposed substation is an essential component of the interconnector project; secondly, that investigations have determined this particular site to be technically superior for the purpose and, therefore, the Powerlink preferred site; thirdly, that the proposed use is in the broader public interest; and, fourthly, that Powerlink has carried out environmental, economic, social and cultural heritage assessments of the site and developed management plans for the project to address any adverse effects.

Powerlink has also acquired all pre-existing rights and interests over the land, including native title rights and interests. I therefore support the proposed revocation action and commend the proposal to the House for approval.
