



Speech by

Hon. V. LESTER
MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

Hansard 23 November 1999

TREE-CLEARING GUIDELINES

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Keppel—NPA) (10.27 a.m.): On Sunday night, the campaign of victimisation against primary producers started by the current Minister for Natural Resources continued with a story on the 60 Minutes program. That story highlighted how many people who have an opinion in this debate, but who have no business or investment at stake, have forgotten where food comes from, who pays the bills in this State and who provides jobs for Queenslanders. The story also highlighted that the Beattie Government was prepared to use emotive spin doctors and ambit claims in the tree-clearing debate. In this story, figures on clearing rates were misused: TV footage was used ahead of science.

Producer groups have negotiated in good faith with the State Government and the Greens to set sensible tree-clearing guidelines for freehold land. Some producers say that they have been prepared to do that, but the Beattie Government is now to introduce mandatory restrictions. While the Premier of this State postures and plays politics for the TV cameras and blames the Federal Government, the fact remains that this is a State Government responsibility. While he lodges ambit claims with the Federal Government for millions of dollars to deal with issues such as greenhouse gases, the RFA, trawling and tree-clearing guidelines, he has not put up one cent of State money. That is why rural industry does not trust this Beattie Government any more. They have no confidence in this Government because they have not seen the colour of its money. That is why the so-called panic clearing is occurring.

If the State Government is to take away the value of land-holders' investment or their ability to make a living, the Government should pay fair compensation. There can be no balanced outcome until the Premier shows some goodwill. It is time that the Premier showed us the money.
