



Speech by

CHRISTINE SCOTT

MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS

Hansard 9 April 2002

LAND PROTECTION [PEST AND STOCK ROUTE MANAGEMENT] BILL

Mrs CHRISTINE SCOTT (Charters Towers—ALP) (4.26 p.m.): This bill draws attention to the magnificent public asset that is represented by the state's network of stock routes and the need to manage that network for future generations in a sustainable manner.

The Queensland stock route network consists of approximately 72,000 kilometres of land corridor traversing much of Queensland and covering many biogeographical regions. Stock routes are usually roads and land corridors used for vehicular movement, power, gas and telecommunications infrastructure and other industry. Along with stock feed, water facilities and reserves, the network contains remnant vegetation, rare and endangered animal species and culturally significant sites. The demands of these multiple uses and the resourcing of them can often conflict.

This bill recognises the pressing need to manage the natural resources on the network for future generations, while continuing to cater for the current needs of travelling stock. The proposed bill establishes a management framework for the network that preserves its existing functionality and biodiversity and ensures its sustainability for future generations. Recognition of the importance of these land corridors that criss-cross the biogeographical regions of Queensland is given by the new bill. Under this bill the 48 local governments with a history of stock movements are identified, and each local government will be required under the bill to sponsor development of a stock route management plan. A partnership approach to planned development will seek involvement from the land-holders, industry, community and government agencies—all local stakeholders.

The proposed bill requires local governments to have a stock route network management plan within one year of the commencement of the new act. The plan may include: identification of those parts of the network in the local government area; achievable objectives; strategies, activities and other responsibilities for achieving the objectives; monitoring the plan's implementation and evaluating its effectiveness; the plan may be for a period of not more than four years; and local government must implement the plan as far as practicable. The effectiveness of each management plan must be reviewed at least three months prior to the end of the financial year and when the state-wide stock route network strategy is amended.

The new bill also provides that maps held by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines will define the stock route network. This will overcome the current position where it is not clear which roads or tracks are stock routes.

Under the proposed bill, stock travel permits may have attached conditions for their use. These may include conditions associated with road safety, stock supervision, stock warning signs and public liability insurance. Local governments may issue permits only for their area, or for longer journeys with the permission of effective local governments along the route. These improvements overcome an issue where, presently, livestock travel permits lack provision for conditions and can be issued for travel in another local government area.

To the detriment of travelling stock, the current agistment permit system on stock routes does not adequately protect against excessive use of pasture from local agistment of livestock. Under the proposed bill, agistment of livestock on the stock route network is subject to criteria. The stock owner's land must be affected by drought, fire or flood, and the applicant must not have had a permit upon the subject land for the past three months. Conditions similar to those for travelling livestock will be attached to permits.

Agistment fees are proposed to reflect pasture type, current conditions and market values. The period of an agistment permit is proposed to be up to 28 days, with one opportunity for renewal by the applicant to cover the same land on the network. These proposed changes will remove any confusion and inconvenience caused by the present system, which requires two permits for travel along state controlled roads that are also stock routes. They will also allow for the sustainable management of the stock route network.

Under the bill, local governments and the state will share the stock route fees equally. This clearly signifies the partnership between the two tiers of government and gives true recognition of the important role of local government in natural resource management—in this case of the stock route network. It ensures that local government receives a fair proportion of the proceeds of its activities associated with the management of these important land corridors, activities which include planning for effective management of the stock routes. Under the present legislation this is not recognised and local government does not receive fees as they are paid directly to the state. These are important changes that will enhance management of our stock route network. I commend the bill to the House.