



Speech by

Hon. D. WELLS

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

Hansard 30 October 2002

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Environmental Protection Agency, Wildlife Management Review Discussion Paper

Hon. D. M. WELLS (Murrumbidgee—ALP) (Minister for Environment) (9.52 a.m.), by leave: I table the wildlife management review discussion paper. To continue a theme from Minister Foley, I come to bury red tape, not to praise it. After two years of intensive work with the community and interest groups—

Mr Schwarten interjected.

Mr WELLS: I thank the Minister for Public Works. After two years of intensive work with the community and interest groups, the Environmental Protection Agency has released the wildlife management review discussion paper for public comment. It is about cutting red tape and reducing fees for those who keep animals which require a licence. It is about giving pet owners a wider choice of pets and giving wildlife carer groups a bigger say.

Mr Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr WELLS: I thank the Minister for Primary Industries. I stand corrected. The Beattie government made an election commitment in 2001 to review the regulations relating to wildlife management in Queensland. The purpose was to make the licensing system and regulation system more user friendly and effective. While the conservation principles in the act remain as valid today as they did when it was commenced in the early 1990s, the regulation now needs to better reflect the values of the community with regard to Queensland's wildlife. Over 1,000 submissions were received. I will send copies of this review to the electorate offices of all honourable members. If any honourable member wishes to have a copy now, I will make it available to them. My department's aim is to continue to provide effective wildlife conservation while streamlining administrative practices—

Mr Lucas interjected.

Mr WELLS: No, it is not. It is about modernisation and the cutting of red tape. It is about preserving our heritage without being too burdened by it. It is about streamlining administration, reducing government red tape and introducing more self-regulation. The proposals will create a system just as stringent but with more attention given to conservation issues. In some cases it is proposed that the regulations be tightened to address emerging wildlife conservation concerns. The reforms include significant benefits for people who keep birds recreationally, including introducing a five-year licence at a similar cost to that paid now for a one-year licence and removing the need for annual renewal. Honourable members would be pleased to know that introducing a five-year licence instead of five one-year licences and charging the same for the five-year licence as is charged for the one-year licence actually saves the government money as well as the people who pay the licence fees.

More species of birds such as captive-bred cockatoos and galahs will be able to be kept without a licence, reflecting their now wide availability through licensed pet shops. Pet shops that are accredited to do so will be able to sell a limited number of commonly kept reptiles to licensed enthusiasts. For instance, it is proposed to revise the record-keeping requirements for non-commercial licence types to reduce administrative burdens, abolishing returns of operations for these licence types. Movement permits which are currently required for wildlife trade will be replaced by self-administered movement advices for all transactions within Queensland. This is a considerable reduction in administration for licensed trade activities. It is a balanced package that has taken into account an extraordinarily wide range of comments and interests, but it is underpinned by sound principles of protecting and conserving our native species in the wild.

This is a paper for discussion. The views of honourable members would be extremely welcome, but it is aimed to achieve a better system of regulation that involves less regulation but involves more freedom for people and a better deal for our wildlife and sounder principles of conservation. I commend the paper to honourable members.