



Speech by

CARRYN SULLIVAN

MEMBER FOR PUMICESTONE

Hansard 30 April 2003

LAND LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (4.42 p.m.): I rise to support the Land Legislation Amendment Bill. I must say that some of my constituents who have spoken to me about sections of this bill are very pleased that it has been introduced into the House. This bill seeks to amend five pieces of legislation: namely, the Aboriginal Land Act 1991, the Land Act 1994, the Mineral Resources Act 1989, the Valuation of Land Act 1994 and the Valuers Registration Act 1992.

I was transferred to Thursday Island for my first teaching experience, and I am quite familiar with the Torres Strait area, in particular Horn Island, which was often the focus of attention for teachers like myself who lived there. It had the only airstrip in the entire area, and I remember how popular it was when we used to fly out at holiday times.

Clause 4 of the bill inserts into the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 a proposed new section 137AB—confirmation of the status of a particular land. This section which concerns particular land on Horn Island, which I have just said contained the only airstrip in the area, declares that a specified sales permit issued in 1990 under the Forestry Act 1959 does not create and has never created for the purposes of section 19 an interest in land and that the amending regulation was valid. Here the intention is to transfer certain land on Horn Island in freehold to the Kaurareg people as native title holders under section 19 of the Aboriginal Land Act 1991. It appears that with regard to this certain piece of land there is a Torres Strait council sales permit issued under the Forestry Act 1959, and a question has arisen as to whether this permit confers upon that council an interest in the land. The intention of the provision is to declare that this is not the case and it will permit the proposed transfer to the native title holders to proceed.

This point was raised in the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee, with particular reference to its retrospective nature. The committee has concluded in this case that the transfer of the land in question would be of real benefit to the native title holder. Therefore, the land will be able to proceed to be transferred despite the existence of the sales permit issued to a third party; namely, the Torres Strait council under the Forestry Act.

I have heard a number of reports about Shelburne Bay. The member for Tablelands is not here, but I did find some of her remarks about the environment quite incredible. Recently I saw a documentary on the area that I am afraid to say was not the same documentary as the member for Tablelands saw. If she had seen the one that I saw—

Mr Shine interjected.

Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN: It could have been on the Simpsons. I take that interjection from the member for Toowoomba North. As the viewer of this particular documentary that I saw, I found the photography of the area absolutely breathtaking. As an environmentalist—and I know all genuine environmentalists here would agree—I felt it simply had to remain in its pristine condition and untouched.

Mrs Reilly: I agree.

Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN: I am glad. I am sure all members of this House agree. I visited Cape York on a number of occasions, and I agree with the minister when he said that it is an area of unique significance. So I was delighted to read that a joint state-Commonwealth study entitled Cape York Peninsula land use study recognised this and was implemented to ensure that any decisions about

land on the cape were appropriate. There was wide-ranging public consultation in various forms up and down the length and breadth of Queensland, and even on Bribie Island constituents were talking about the importance of ensuring Shelburne Bay's natural values were protected. This legislation will guarantee that Shelburne Bay will never be mined. The two existing mining leases over the area will be cancelled. Even the response from the Queensland Mining Council was supportive of the move to protect this unique area. This is a win for commonsense and will save Shelburne Bay for the benefit of all Queenslanders in the future.

I would like to comment on the part of the bill which includes a number of amendments to the Valuation of Land Act 1994, most of which clarify or update that act to reflect changes in other associated legislation. In the past, state leasehold lands have been valued as an undivided whole for local government rating and state land rental purposes. Land valuations have been a big topic of conversation among the landowners in the electorate of Pumicestone, particularly those who own waterfront property. Land valuations have soared, some as much as 40 per cent on areas of Bribie Island and Beachmere.

Since the Caboolture Shire Council bases its rates on state government land valuation, many ratepayers are concerned that the rates will also rise considerably. I know the member for Glass House, who is sitting in the chair, has also received a number of concerns about this. I have assured people, as I am sure she has, that rates and valuations are not tied in any way. They are completely separate, but some councils choose to base their rates on state government land valuations.

I reminded the member for Callide, who spoke on this matter briefly before—and I say briefly because I thought he sat down under the 60 minute time limit. Is that true?

Mr Shine: He had 45 to go.

Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN: He actually agreed with me, and he admitted that I was right when I said that the Local Government Act provides other ways for local councils to base their rates. I know there is talk in the Caboolture shire at the moment about looking at ways of changing the rates, and I am looking forward as much as other ratepayers are in the Caboolture shire to seeing where these talks lead.

A government member: They talk of nothing else.

Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN: I commend the minister. I appreciate the time and effort that has been put into this bill and I commend it to the House.