



Speech by

Hon. D. WELLS

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBIDGE

Hansard 19 August 2003

REVOCATION OF STATE FOREST

Hon. D. M. WELLS (Murrumbidgee—ALP) (Minister for Environment) (3.21 p.m.): I move—

- (1) That this House requests the Governor in Council to revoke the setting apart and declaration as State Forest under the Forestry Act 1959 of those areas as set out in the Proposal tabled by me in the House on 27 May 2003, viz—
 - (a) All those parts of Curtis Island State Forest (SF27) described as Lot 11 on CP860464 and within stations V-AX on CP860403 and containing about 139.2 hectares;
 - (b) All those parts of Expedition State Forest (SF29) described as within stations 24-32-40-24 on SP134382 and Area A on draft plan FTY1847 and containing about 130.425 hectares;
 - (c) All that part of Mahen State Forest (SF98) described as Lot 3 on SP106733 and containing 17.29 hectares;
 - (d) All that part of Amaroo State Forest (SF236) described as Lot 1 on SP158692 and containing 3.567 hectares;
 - (e) All that part of Parklands State Forest (SF249) described as within stations 5-4-3-5 on SP116483 and containing 0.1199 of a hectare;
 - (f) All those parts of Wietalaba State Forest (SF583) described as Lot 4 on SP144762 and within stations 3-7-8-9-4-3 on SP144762 and containing 37.3257 hectares;
 - (g) All those parts of Watalgan State Forest (SF898) described as Areas A, B and C on draft plan FTY1820 and containing about 0.668 of a hectare;
 - (h) The whole of Mapleton State Forest (SF1239) containing an area of about 2.4 hectares.
- (2) That Mr Speaker and the Clerk of the Parliament convey a copy of this resolution to the Minister for Environment for submission to the Governor in Council.

I only support the revocation of land from the parks and forest estate for alternative uses if it can be clearly demonstrated that the proposed usage is in the broader public interest. Careful consideration has been given to each proposal and in each instance detailed consultation has occurred with affected state and local government agencies. Native title issues have also been considered in relation to the above proposals and in each case it has been determined that the action may proceed. I will now outline the background for each proposal and the offsetting arrangements that will be implemented where appropriate.

Curtis Island State Forest SF27

The first proposal deals with the revocation of areas totalling about 139.2 hectares from Curtis Island State Forest, located about 20 kilometres north-west of Gladstone. As a result of a tenure renewal application some years ago involving a pastoral holding, new tourism and grazing leases were granted with the remainder of the holding becoming available for a national park, conservation park and state forest purposes. As a result of this grant, in February 2003 an area of about 7,630 hectares was added to Curtis Island State Forest.

Part of the grant involved the excision from the existing state forest of an area of about 83 hectares for addition to the tourism lease and an area of about 56.2 hectares for road purposes. The 83 hectares will be the location of the dam to be built to provide the water supply to the proposed resort at Black Head on the east coast of Curtis Island. The road will link the resort to the original homestead in the centre of the island enabling visitors to the resort to experience a working cattle station as part of their stay on Curtis Island.

Expedition State Forest SF29

The second proposal involves two actions relating to the revocation of areas totalling about 130.425 hectares from Expedition State Forest, located about 155 kilometres south-east of Emerald. In the first action the holder of a special lease over part of the state forest has applied to freehold an area of 129.8 hectares that contains a dwelling and associated farm infrastructure. The area proposed for excision is adjacent to the Dawson Highway with a frontage of approximately 1.6 kilometres and has been held by the current lessee since 1987. The subject area is no longer required for forestry purposes and excision of the area will have minimal impact on forestry operations on the reserve. As part of this proposal an area of about 91.5 hectares on the southern side of the Dawson Highway will be made available for addition to the state forest.

The second action is the result of an application by a second lessee and applies to a different area of state forest. It involves an area of about 0.625 of a hectare required for a bore site to be excised from the leased area and included in the adjoining grazing homestead perpetual lease. The forestry values of the bore site are significantly disturbed with little scope for rehabilitation in the immediate future. Because of the small size and current use of the area, public benefit to present and future generations will not be diminished by the proposed excision action.

Mahen State Forest SF98

The third proposal involves the revocation of 17.29 hectares from Mahen State Forest that is located about 40 kilometres north-east of Dalby. The Wambo Shire Council has utilised part of Mahen State Forest for recreation purposes since 1964 under a term lease agreement. Part of the area proposed for excision has been utilised for many years as a cricket oval, and that part will be used for horse and motorcycle riding trails. It has now been determined that the most appropriate tenure for this area is a recreation reserve under the trusteeship of the Wambo Shire Council. The area proposed for revocation also contains small patches of remnant softwood vegetation of high conservation value, and the Wambo Shire Council has agreed to manage the land to protect those values.

Amaroo State Forest SF236

The fourth proposal deals with the revocation of 3.567 hectares from Amaroo State Forest, located about 21 kilometres south-west of Blackwater. A new coalmine is being developed at Rolleston and Queensland Transport is planning to extend the rail line to service the new mine. Part of the proposed rail line crosses Amaroo State Forest at its eastern extremity, and Queensland Transport has sought to excise the affected area. Investigations have shown the proposed rail line cannot be moved further east to avoid Amaroo State Forest as there is an existing mining lease on the adjoining area, which is currently used for the south Blackwater mine stockpile and no provision currently exists to resume part of the mining lease.

The affected state forest area is not considered to have significant conservation or commercial timber values. Compensation for the revoked area will enable the Environmental Protection Agency to acquire land for addition to the parks and forest estate to offset this loss. The revocation will allow the railway line to be constructed so it will be ready to serve the mine, which is scheduled for full-scale production next year.

Parklands State Forest SF249

The fifth proposal involves the excision of 0.1199 of a hectare from Parklands State Forest, located just north of Nambour. The owners of freehold land which adjoins the state forest have sought to acquire this portion of the state forest for access to their property. The subject area was formerly part of a special lease for agricultural purposes, which expired in 1998 and was not renewed. The owners' house has been constructed very close to the state forest boundary. Part of the lease area provided practical access to the lessee's residence on freehold land adjoining the state forest.

The area now proposed for revocation from the state forest will be included in the adjoining freehold lot to secure access to the property. The balance of the lease area will be rehabilitated to wet sclerophyll forest incorporating a fire line for protection of both the state forest and improvements on adjoining land.

Wietalaba State Forest SF583

Proposal No. 6 involves the revocation of about 37.3257 hectares from Wietalaba State Forest, which is located about 28 kilometres south of Calliope. The Gladstone Area Water Board expressed an interest in acquiring this portion of the Wietalaba State Forest to accommodate the realignment of the Gladstone to Monto road forced by the raising of the Awoonga Dam and some subsequent water inundation. In conjunction with this excision, the Gladstone Area Water Board has offered an area consisting of 40.6 hectares for addition to Wietalaba State Forest to offset the area proposed for revocation.

Watalgan State Forest—SF989—the seventh proposal—involves the revocation of about 0.668 of a hectare from Watalgan State Forest, which is located about 40 kilometres north-west of Bundaberg. An area of about 36 hectares was excised from Watalgan State Forest to allow

Queensland Rail to realign and upgrade the north coast rail line. The Department of Natural Resources and Mines later advised that some areas were overlooked in the original excision and that a further revocation of small areas totalling about 0.668 of a hectare was required for rail and road purposes to allow the finalisation of the project.

The final proposal involves the revocation of areas totalling about 2.4 hectares, being the whole of Mapleton State Forest, located about 10 kilometres west of Nambour. As the excision of the subject area was part of a longstanding exchange proposal, this area was retained as state forest when the balance of the forest was transferred to forest reserve states as part of the South-East Queensland Forest Agreement process. Part of the area proposed for excision is to be added to an adjoining freehold property and the balance is required for road purposes.

The land exchange was initiated some years ago to provide dedicated access to a proposed state forest park as entry to the area was via the adjoining freehold land. The owners of the adjoining freehold property agreed to the exchange proposal. In 1991 an agreement was entered into between the landowners and the Conservator of Forests for the purpose of an exchange in terms of section 371 of the Land Act 1962 under which both parties agreed that the areas proposed for exchange were of equal value. It was considered that the proposed land exchange and associated road dedication would enhance boundary definition between the state forest and the adjoining freehold land and would aid in the management and the fire protection of the state forest, now Mapleton forest reserve.