



Speech by

Mrs D. PRATT

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

Hansard 25 November 2003

AGRICULTURAL PLANNING SYSTEM

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (10.23 a.m.): The latest volley to be fired against rural industries is known as the agricultural planning system, a draft proposal of which is being circulated, albeit apparently in restricted circles. A small article buried in the numerous pages of the major city newspaper compared to the front-page lead story of a rural newspaper could not have more clearly defined the difference in the degree of importance this APS proposal has to city and rural populations.

Two components make up this proposal—material change of use and works—which seeks to develop ways to better manage land. In other words, people can be told what they can grow, how many cattle they can run and in what areas. Although it is said that this will be advisory only, there is a real concern that this agricultural planning system will become more substantial, as have many other proposals in the past, and become state planning policy.

From conversing with several councils in my electorate I have found that the general belief is that, if introduced, this proposal, which is yet to reach the ears of most of them, whether it be for guidance only or outlined in some legislative form, would impact significantly on land-holders in agricultural areas. It would be an impact they can ill afford at any time, let alone at the moment, while the drought continues. As well, history has shown that, should this matter be progressed and endorsed in any form by the state government, it is more likely that local government would end up administering any new policy. The resources of most small, rural based local governments simply are not available and probably never will be.

Rosalie Shire Council stated, 'Council is strongly of the opinion that there is sufficient regulation in the agriculture area and rejects outright the introduction of any further controls.' All other councils I have spoken with, who have heard nothing about this APS, agree with the comments from Rosalie Shire Council and ask, 'Whatever happened to community consultation?' Put simply, governments now believe that we have learnt nothing on the land. They do not understand that a grazier, a farmer or a crop grower has learnt through trial and error over generations of farming that if you abuse your land you will starve, but if you look after the land it will look after you and sustain you and your family for generations to come.