



Speech by

**Mr L. SPRINGBORG**

**MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS**

---

Hansard 1 May 2003

#### **PROPERTY RIGHTS**

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.26 a.m.): The continued rise in uncertainty and loss of security of property rights is the greatest threat to sustainable land management in Queensland. To manage land for long-term sustainability and to invest for long-term productivity land-holders need to be confident that their rights to their property are secure. They need to be confident that they will have access to those property rights in the long term if they are to make long-term sustainable investment and management decisions. When land-holders do not have secure title to their property there is little incentive to manage or invest for long-term sustainability. Without security of title to well-defined and compensatable property rights the incentive is towards a short-term profit 'get what you can while you can' approach. This is the biggest impediment to achieving the sustainable management of Queensland's natural resources that we all want to see.

The security of private property ownership is being destroyed by a series of changes in legislation that have lessened the confidence that Queensland land-holders need to manage and invest sustainably. Essentially, land-holders have been dispossessed from a part of their property asset by the removal of the rights to develop or use it. That dispossession has been justified by demonising land-holders as environmental vandals who are wrecking the land, pumping the rivers dry and killing the Great Barrier Reef. In reality, nothing could be further from the truth. No-one has a greater interest in long-term sustainability than land-holders themselves, provided their right to their property is secure. Yet this approach of demonising land-holders to justify dispossessing them of their rights has been used repeatedly by the Beattie Labor government in the implementation of a series of pieces of legislation and regulatory changes. Without exception the justification for this ongoing dispossession has been more about sensationalism and media hype than level-headed science.

The government's approach of dishonestly hyping up these issues for cheap political gains is unquestionably making matters worse in the field and threatening to reverse the focus on achieving sustainable management. In contrast, the new coalition, as part of its positive politics agenda, will introduce a legally binding charter of property rights.

Time expired.