



Speech by

**PAUL HOOLIHAN**

**MEMBER FOR KEPPEL**

---

Hansard 20 April 2004

**VEGETATION MANAGEMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mr HOOLIHAN** (Keppel—ALP) (4.33 p.m.): I have pleasure in rising to speak to the Vegetation Management Act. We have heard from the National Party about the legislation that it was secretive and oppressive and from a previous speaker how it has incurred the hatred of land-holders, but the legislation reflects the inclusion of land-holders and local experts in the vegetation management framework. That has been a priority of the Beattie government and that priority is reflected in this bill.

In 2000 the government introduced the concept of regional vegetation management plans. Twenty-three regional vegetation management plans, one for each of the state's bioregions, were developed. They incorporated local knowledge, drew on the expertise of land-holders and utilised the latest scientific information available. These regional vegetation management plans were to assist with the management of Queensland's vegetation. It was a major challenge. The plans were developed by the community to advise the government on regionally appropriate ways to manage vegetation.

The plans also provided communities with a tool to manage native vegetation mindful of local issues, which are probably issues like those around Aramac or places mentioned by the previous speaker. By March 2004, 23 draft regional vegetation management plans were completed which addressed vegetation management issues that are important to each region, involved regional stakeholders in the community in widespread participation, had scientific and technical support, and covered both leasehold and freehold land.

Continuing the commitment to include land-holders and local communities in the vegetation management framework, the information in the draft regional vegetation management plans has been integrated into the new vegetation management framework. Specifically, information from the draft plans has been used to draw up 23 bioregion specific codes which will be the work manual for assessing clearing applications under the new legislation. Each time a land-holder applies to clear vegetation on their property, the application is assessed against the code drawn up for their particular bioregion. The codes address some of the issues that have been raised: broadscale clearing under the ballot, ongoing clearing of certain regrowth on leasehold land, thinning, encroachment, weed control, projects of state significance, minor management activities and extractive industries.

By assessing clearing against those codes, the government can ensure that the approved clearing delivers on the aim of the new laws, which is to conserve remnant, endangered and of concern regional ecosystems; prevent land degradation and the loss of biodiversity; manage the environmental effects of clearing; and reduce greenhouse emissions.

I would like to emphasise that the draft regional vegetation management plans have been instrumental in the development of the codes under the new laws. They have provided invaluable local information on the best and most appropriate approaches to sustainable vegetation management. The government appreciates the efforts of those land-holders and community representatives who gave of their time and their expertise in the drafting of the regional vegetation management plans. I would like to congratulate in particular a group in my own electorate of Keppel—the Capricorn Dawson Planning Group—for its sterling work and tireless effort in crafting its regional vegetation management plan.

All Queenslanders, and particularly those who played such an important part in preparing those regional vegetation management plans, can rest assured that the plans have been fundamental in creating the codes by which all vegetation management will now be assessed and they will give the certainty that was mentioned by the previous speaker.