



Speech by
Jan Jarratt

MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

Hansard Tuesday, 17 April 2007

LAND AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Ms JARRATT (Whitsunday—ALP) (6.19 pm): It gives me pleasure to rise to speak in support of the Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2007. This bill most significantly introduces initiatives which address issues pertaining to rural leasehold land. I was surprised to learn that about 65 per cent of the state is covered by rural leasehold land—that is from one end of the state to the other. That is quite significant. That land includes Channel Country, rangelands, semiarid and desert country and some rich agricultural land as well. It is of course important to the livelihoods and lifestyles of those who lease that land. I do not know where those opposite get the idea that they have some monopoly on understanding the importance of land to those who work and live on it.

Mr Johnson: You're a product of the land.

Ms JARRATT: Absolutely. I take the interjection of the member for Gregory. The member knows that I, as a Labor member of this parliament, understand the relationship that people who live on the land and live off the land have with the land. We are not in disagreement—most of those people understand that it is only by caring for their land that they are going to be able to hand it down to their children or leave it in a better condition than when they came to it. I do not think we need to have these silly arguments anymore about this side of the House supporting departments full of greenies and people who are not capable of thinking through these sorts of equations. That is simply untrue.

That land is, as I said, very important not only to the people who live on it and off it but also to everyone who calls themselves a Queenslander. It is part of our heritage and it is part of what those who will one day call themselves Queenslanders will inherit. It is so important to the future of this state.

This bill provides a core vehicle for reform of administrative processes in relation to leasehold land in the state. The Rural Leasehold Land Strategy has been developed as part of the Blueprint for the Bush initiative. I digress for one moment to give a plug to the Blueprint for the Bush, which I think is probably the most significant strategy that has ever been created that is intended to recognise the values of our rural Queenslanders and to bring together the city and the bush in such a way that we can all have a common understanding.

A government member: It is a Labor initiative.

Ms JARRATT: It is a great Labor initiative. It was never done while the National Party was in government. It is the Labor government that has taken the initiative to finally bring together the bush and the city to share those common values and understanding that are so important to the future of this state. It is a partnership that is delivering for Queensland. It seeks to foster and support sustainable and prosperous rural communities because we understand that without rural communities prospering the state cannot go forward into the future.

The Rural Leasehold Land Strategy recognises and facilitates key outcomes of both the lessee and the state. For the lessee, as has been mentioned before, security of tenure is probably the most critical element, and that has been recognised and addressed in these amendments. For the state it is about

sustainable management. Nothing is more important in a time when we are looking down the barrel of climate change and all that that implies for our future than to focus and to home in on sustainable management of our land and our water.

This bill enables lessees to apply for lease extensions. These extensions will be guided by landholder commitment to introduce or maintain land management practices that will deliver desired outcomes. This may include allowing Indigenous access and enhanced conservation. It brings into prominence that part of the Land Act that addresses a duty of care. It puts some meat on the bones of what duty of care actually means under a leasehold arrangement. I think this can only be a good thing. With those few words, I commend the bill to the House.