



Speech by

Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

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FORESTRY PLANTATIONS QUEENSLAND

Mr POWELL (Glass House—LNP) (9.29 pm): The tragedy that is the sale of Forestry Plantations Queensland continues to be one of failure and farce. This is not the first time I have spoken on this matter, and I can assure honourable members that it will not be the last. This evening I would like to touch on three elements. The first element is the ongoing neglect of the FPQ staff. As if the uncertainty created by the sale is not enough, I now understand that equipment and stock are being removed from the Beerburrum nursery and being shipped to Toolara. This is despite commitments to keep the nursery at Beerburrum open. How devastating for staff to watch their hard work uprooted and re-established elsewhere, particularly when they know that the whole exercise is to jazz up the Toolara nursery as part of the FPQ sale. Those opposite will tell us it is business as usual. I can assure them it is not. I call on the government to start treating the FPQ staff as adults, and to start being open and transparent about what is going on.

Secondly, questions are being raised over the tenure of FPQ land set aside by the government for its proposed desalination plant on Bribie Island. Just in case the people of Bribie missed it, yes, the government is still planning a desalination plant on the island. The Minister for Natural Resources has confirmed this in his response to the petitions tabled by the members for Pumicestone and Morayfield.

The question I have for the government this evening pertains to the status of a parcel of land previously reserved for the desalination plant. Is it part of the 33,000 hectares of freehold land now being sold? If so, what development restrictions are being placed on it to ensure it is used for its future purpose of water capture? If not, has it been retained as crown land? In short, is it for sale or not?

Finally, I am sickened that once more the people of Queensland have been misled. Despite earlier assurances, the FPQ sale involves not just the trees but also includes the land. It includes land in the electorate of Glass House. Once again, the people of the Sunshine Coast are staring down the barrel of a concrete jungle stretching north from Caboolture—a jungle no-one wants.

We are told by the government and in today's *Sunshine Coast Daily* by economist Richard Katter that the sale must go through so it can fill the state coffers and build hospitals and schools. Well, let us do the maths. The sale is expected to bring in about \$500 million to \$600 million. The budget papers from last year suggest a new school costs in the order of \$30 million to \$40 million. So the sale could potentially fund 15 new schools. But FPQ brings in \$100 million each and every year. That is three new schools a year every year ad infinitum. In five years, that is the same 15 schools. In 10 years, that is 30 schools. In 20 years, that is 60 schools. So even the maths shows how farcical this fire sale is.

The land may have limited ecological significance. It may even be the 'biological desert' Mr Katter calls it. But do members know what? It is very good for growing pine trees—pine trees that return \$100 million a year to the state coffers. To sell it and FPQ is madness.

(Time expired)