



Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

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NATURAL RESOURCES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr KNUTH (Dalrymple—LNP) (12.10 pm): In rising to speak to the Natural Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, I note that the bill has many objectives. One objective is to facilitate the restructure of the state's interest in Forestry Plantations Queensland and to amend the Forestry Act and other legislation to provide an appropriate regulatory framework for the future. This includes continuation of plantation forestry management on state plantation forest and protecting existing access rights over state plantation forest. It also facilitates the sale of Forestry Plantations Queensland. If we were to measure good governance on any issue, if there is crisis after crisis—a water crisis, an energy crisis and a health crisis—and you have to sell off profitable assets, there is obviously a problem, especially in relation to the sale of Forestry Plantations Queensland.

I would like to raise issues that relate to Forestry Plantations Queensland, and that is the infestation of lantana and noxious weeds growing in the Danbulla State Forest and in Forestry Plantations Queensland in my electorate on the Tablelands surrounding the eastern section of Lake Tinaroo. Before the facilitation of this sale, I hope this issue will be resolved. This area is World Heritage listed and holds numerous important sacred sites for the Tablelands' Yidinji people, who are the traditional owners of the area. The area is also home to many native animals.

The Yidinji people have expressed deep concern about the shocking state of the forest and have been requesting state government support in cleaning up this mess, but they have been led down the garden path. A large area of the forest was damaged by Cyclone Larry in March 2006 and nothing was done to regenerate the forest. Consequently, the forest is overrun by lantana and noxious weeds. This includes Forestry Plantations Queensland, which is mixed amongst the Danbulla State Forest. Basically the main problem is the spread of lantana. The state government is doing nothing about this. If we can clean up the lantana in these Forestry Plantations Queensland areas, I believe and the Yidinji people believe that it will protect the surrounding national park.

I have here a department of primary industries fact sheet of 2008 on the pest lantana. The fact sheet's photos were taken at the Danbulla State Forest. I table this fact sheet for honourable members to review.

Tabled paper: Copies of Queensland government fact sheets relating to lantana [\[1948\]](#).

Lantana is declared a class 3 plant under the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002 and is ravaging this forest plantation and threatening adjoining national park areas. The national park is presently relatively free of infestation. However, it is only a matter of time before it, too, is overrun if the lantana is not cleared up in the Forestry Plantations Queensland parts of the forest. I have personally visited the forest, and it is a disgrace. I have seen the devastation that is occurring in this environmentally significant area. I say to the minister that his support and assistance in addressing the traditional owners' concerns to have the lantana cleaned up would be greatly appreciated. We do not want the minister to ignore this area because of this proposed sale in the area.

We are seeing the proposed sale of Forestry Plantations Queensland and the proposed sale of many other assets, but we are also seeing the continued purchase of national parks. These national parks are not looked after, they are not tended and they are not properly maintained. They are a breeding ground for feral animals and noxious weeds. I hope that we are not selling these assets, especially Forestry Plantations Queensland, so we can buy more national parks which will become infested with lantana, rubber vine, feral animals and noxious weeds. It would not be so bad if they were properly maintained.

Another big concern is that of forestry leases which are expiring at the moment. These people have managed those forestry leases for over 30 years. A lot of these leases are about to expire. These leases have contributed a lot to this state in regard to providing timber, but there is uncertainty over the continuation of those leases. The state government is turning a lot of those forestry leases into national parks. If they cannot manage these parks, why are they continually purchasing national parks, especially when the state is broke? The state is broke. If it was not broke, it would not be selling off Queensland Rail, the Port of Brisbane, Abbot Point Coal Terminal, Forestry Plantations Queensland—and the list goes on.

Another policy objective of the bill is to clarify some of the key provisions relating to implementation of the Delbessie Agreement. I do not know whether we can say that it is an agreement, especially when we have seen the wild rivers policy, reef protection, vegetation management protection which protects environment regrowth, and moratoriums put in place—and the list goes on. I am not sure that you could say that it is an agreement, but anything to secure the extension of leasehold land is always welcome. Most importantly, there needs to be security for the landowners to invest and concentrate on grazing and agricultural activities.

Under the Delbessie Agreement the security is based on the conditions of the land. However, much of the land depends on factors that are beyond the leaseholder's control. For example, having a national park beside your property means that you have to face the problems of what is in that national park, such as the spread of noxious weeds that I have referred to. Many landowners adjacent to national parks are battling to fight what is coming from those national parks.

We need to remember that the average age of a grazier, a landowner or a farmer is well over 50. With few financially able to provide work for younger family members, the daily management of these properties is often left to the older generation. Concerns have been relayed to me from graziers who want an assurance that, after negotiated land management agreements have been put in place and environmental or personal disasters have occurred, the land management agreements will remain valid. I believe they will but, if a particular leaseholder suffers a marriage break-up, an illness, a plague of grasshoppers, a drought or a crisis, will the agreement remain valid? Because sometimes there are issues that are beyond their control. We have had a drought that lasted five years. If we were assessed on the management of that property after a five-year drought, hopefully common sense would prevail but this is beyond landowners' controls.

I ask the minister whether, when landowners suffer personal trauma or environmental disasters that are outside their control, these leaseholders will be compensated for the investment they have made if their leases are to be resumed? I hope that is not going to be the case when it comes to putting in stockyards, water, bores and amenities. I hope it will not get to that situation, but when it is beyond their control that is a question that needs to be asked. I wanted to bring that to the attention of the House.