




Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

Hansard Thursday, 12 July 2012

NATIONAL PARKS

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (3.28 pm): Yesterday I asked the LNP government to place a moratorium on Labor's policy to transfer land to national parks in Queensland. When I asked the same thing of the former Labor government, they thought it was a good idea. Now that the LNP is in power, it appears that a moratorium is a bad idea. Unfortunately, now that it is in power the new government seems to have decided that a lot of Labor policies were not that bad after all.

The management of existing national parks costs Queensland taxpayers millions of dollars a year and the transition of land to national park will mean millions in administration, land purchase and management costs. The current deplorable condition of national parks as a safe haven for feral pests and weeds is costing the landowners of adjoining properties tens of thousands—if not millions—of dollars a year. Continuing this disastrous Labor policy could see the timber industry lose access to thousands of acres essential for the continuation of logging in Queensland.

The Newman government has used the condition of state finances as a reason to sack 20,000 public servants over a very short period. Surely a moratorium that will save millions of dollars while the management of national parks is brought under control is good sensible financial savings policy. It makes good economic sense to ensure national park management is cost effective. It makes good sense to get the process right to take advantage of this underutilised resource. It makes sense to ensure existing national parks are better neighbours for landowners while we provide a secure future for the timber industry in Queensland.

I also urge the government to adopt moves by the New South Wales government to allow controlled hunting in national parks. As other members in north western and Far North Queensland are well aware, there is a significant and growing feral pig problem in our region that threatens the livelihood of thousands of farmers and landowners. Allowing the controlled hunting of feral pests in national parks is the most cost-effective method of addressing the problem when it is abundantly clear that all other methods have failed. Surely the Newman government would see the sense in this.

I would also like to raise the issue of the Kirrama Range Road in the Kennedy Valley north of Cardwell—an issue that I am sure the member for Hinchinbrook will appreciate me bringing up. As the member for Hinchinbrook stated in September last year, this road between our electorates is a vital connecting route between the coast and the hinterland and its restoration, repair and maintenance should be funded by all three levels of government.

Last year Main Roads allocated \$471,000 over two years for work on the road. As the member for Hinchinbrook stated at the time, this is not enough and it leaves some properties without a graded road in either direction. My esteemed colleague also stated that the Cassowary Coast Regional Council should not have to shoulder the financial burden. I encourage the member for Hinchinbrook to work with me, the Minister for Main Roads and the Cassowary Coast Regional Council to ensure that the Hinchinbrook and Dalrymple constituents are able to use this essential route.

(Time expired)