




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

Record of Proceedings, 24 February 2016

MOTION

Vegetation Management Framework

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (6.00 pm): I move—

That any changes to the Vegetation Management Framework must consider:

- (a) rejecting a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to vegetation management on a statewide basis that denies opportunity to parts of North and Western Queensland, these regions being Einasleigh Uplands, Gulf Plains, Cape York, Desert Uplands, North-west Highlands, Mulga Lands, Mitchell Grass Downs and Channel Country;
- (b) properties with the total cleared area of less than 10 per cent be permitted to be cleared up to a maximum of 10 per cent, capped at 5,000 hectares;
- (c) maintaining current self-assessable codes on these properties to ensure opportunity and maintenance of current productivity levels in balance with landscape vegetation retention and connectivity;
- (d) clearing provisions for high-value and irrigated high-value agriculture be extended to include 'high-value land for grazing purposes' such as baled fodder and forage, ensiling and strip grazing;
- (e) that any proposed changes do not impact on previously approved development under the present Vegetation Management Framework.

These bioregions are still more than 90 per cent remnant. We see a lot of development right across the state. However, these areas have not had the opportunity to develop. When we see any changes being made to the Vegetation Management Act or framework, the last thing we want to do is to give these regions another belting. There are many Indigenous communities in these areas that are looking for sustainable management, development and jobs because there is absolutely nothing for those regions to do.

This is a very important issue. In this motion we seek to enable properties with a total cleared area of land of less than 10 per cent to be cleared up to a maximum of 10 per cent, capped at 5,000 hectares. We are saying that we would allow for 10 per cent for those regions—and we are not talking about outside those regions. We are talking about those regions that have not had the opportunity to develop. As you fly over them in a plane, all you see is trees. There has not been that opportunity for development. We do not have the cities, the trains and the houses; we have the bush and yet we have triple the unemployment.

The motion also states—

- (c) maintaining current self-assessable codes on these properties to ensure opportunity and maintenance of current productivity levels in balance with landscape vegetation retention and connectivity;
- (d) clearing provisions for high-value and irrigated high-value agriculture be extended to include 'high-value land for grazing purposes' such as baled fodder and forage, ensiling and strip grazing;
- (e) that any proposed changes do not impact on previously approved development under the present Vegetation Management Framework.

In other words, in relation to those areas we are not asking for any changes to the current Vegetation Management Act but improvements to it. The Indigenous people in those bioregions and the Cape York Peninsula are crying out for development, for sustainability and for jobs. This has been a political football since time began. Peter Beattie introduced the changes to land clearing back in 2004 and that legislation was debated for two days solid. I believe that that was an end to sustainable management right across Queensland. When the Bligh government came in it introduced the ERMPs, which is one of the most diabolical policies enforced upon law-abiding citizens ever seen in our time in the Queensland parliament. Its introduction meant that all landowners were required to fill out ERMP forms, have a look at the areas that have been washed out and inform the government how they are going to review that process. If they did not fill it out, there was a \$75,000 fine or a jail sentence.

These issues are very important and it is very disappointing that the Deputy Premier has been given the responsibility of taking over the vegetation management process. Those landowners are in fear and are trembling. I do commend the LNP for introducing high-value agriculture as a policy. I am not saying they were a great government; it is probably one of the only good things they did because it supports my region. I fully support this motion. I commend this motion to the House.