

**Question on Notice
No. 738
Asked on 11 May 2006**

QUESTION:

MS LEE LONG asked the Minister for Environment, Local Government, Planning and Women (Ms Boyle)—

With reference to the giant red cedar tree felled by Cyclone Larry on the Atherton Tablelands recently and great community concern that there will be nothing preserved for future generations if the log is just left to rot away to nothing—

To avoid damage to the area surrounding the log, will she allow three or four 'wheels' to be cut above the section which has rotted out and for these 'wheels' to be lifted out by helicopter, thereby avoiding damage to the forest and allowing history to be preserved in local museums and with historical societies?

ANSWER:

We now know that one of the key reasons that the red cedar tree fell to the forest floor during Cyclone Larry is due to a high level of rot. The red cedar tree has been assessed and found to contain advanced rot throughout the trunk and even some of the smaller limbs.

The tree is approximately 150 metres from the nearest road, surrounded by rainforest. Consequently, any attempts to salvage even part of this tree would potentially cause significant local impact on the environment.

While the concept of salvaging part of the red cedar tree may sound attractive, very little valuable timber exists and the impacts of this and the precedent this action could set is contrary to the provisions of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area legislation and the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and, as such, this option is legally fettered.

The giant red cedar, in lying where it fell, is not "rotting away to nothing". It is already providing a home to insects, lizards and small marsupials and, over time, will replenish nutrients to provide fertilisation for the next rainforest generation.

Those wanting timber souvenirs from Cyclone Larry are able to access the many trees that fell on land other than the protected area estate.