

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 849

asked on Tuesday, 5 June 2007

MR HINCHLIFFE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND WATER AND MINISTER ASSISTING THE PREMIER IN NORTH QUEENSLAND (MR WALLACE)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the State Government's work on finalising the State Rural Leasehold Land Strategy to improve the management of leasehold land across Queensland—

How will the new strategy benefit leaseholders, the environment, traditional owners and the community generally?

ANSWER:

To provide for the implementation of the State Rural Leasehold Land Strategy legislative amendments were finalised with the assent of the *Land and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2007* (the Act) on 23 April 2007.

The Act provides that lessees will remain eligible for 30 year leases at renewal. However, it also allows the Government to offer 40 year leases for rural leasehold land where the land is in good condition. For the first time lessees who manage their land well by maintaining it in good condition will receive practical and tangible benefits.

For land already in good condition, the Act provides lessees with the opportunity to access 50 year leases where the lessee has, negotiated an indigenous access and use agreement and/or a conservation agreement or covenant (where appropriate).

The Act provides for an indigenous access and use agreement to take the form of an indigenous land use agreement or a contractual agreement between a lessee and the indigenous people particularly concerned with the land, that allows traditional activity to be carried out on the lease land.

It is important to clarify that an indigenous access and use agreement will be a requirement for a 50 year lease where native title may still exist. Additionally, a conservation agreement will be required where the Minister considers the land has conservation values warranting protection.

The Strategy acknowledges that that security of tenure is important for successful grazing and agriculture and rewards sustainable management. To underpin this, the Act enables lessees to apply for lease extensions when

they have been unable to meet these requirements at the commencement of their lease terms.

Those lessees who receive a 30 year lease because their land is not in good condition will be able to access longer terms where they can demonstrate they have returned their land to good condition.

Under the Act, a lessee who is granted a 30 year lease may apply for a one-off extension if they can demonstrate they have returned the land to good condition within the first 10 years.

Similarly, lessees with a 40 year lease also have opportunity to receive a 10 year extension where they choose to enter into an indigenous access use agreement and where appropriate, a conservation agreement. This would effectively bring them up to a 50 year term.

These measures along with a number of other amendments to the *Land Act 1994* now mean that leaseholders, indigenous people and the environment will benefit through greater security of tenure, encouragement of sustainable management practices, and incentives for leaseholders to engage with indigenous people to allow access to traditional lands.