



SEATH HOLSWICH MP STATE MEMBER FOR PINE RIVERS

SPEECH IN PARLIAMENT

12th September 2013

INQUIRY INTO THE CONTINUED RELEVANCE OF GOVERNMENT LAND TENURE ACROSS QUEENSLAND REPORT

Very early on in the term of this parliament the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee was handed the significant task of conducting this inquiry into government land tenure across Queensland. I think it is fair to say this inquiry highlighted two things: firstly, the important role that our system of parliamentary committees can play in investigating significant and complex issues prior to bills being introduced into the parliament and this is certainly one of the strengths of our committee system secondly, the inquiry itself has highlighted the enormous complexity of government land tenure issues across Queensland.

The terms of reference of the inquiry were guide broad and included: ensuring our pastoral and tourism industries are viable into the future; the balanced protection of Queensland's natural values; ongoing and sustainable resource development; and the needs and aspirations of traditional owners.

The nature of public consultation on the inquiries was extensive, with 103 written submissions received and public hearings held in Brisbane, Mackay, Cairns, Rockhampton, Roma, Alpha and the Gold Coast.

In its final report the committee made 44 recommendations, a majority of which have been accepted. The government has already commenced the first phase of implementing the response to the inquiry into leasehold land. This phase focuses on red-tape reduction in lease renewal processes and sets clear pathways to upgrade from leasehold to freehold.

The committee also recommends changes to the Land Act 1994 and other relevant legislation focusing on investment certainty and sustainable land management, particularly in relation to leases for tourism and other commercial purposes and the management of reserves and roads including stock routes.

The response also notes that there will be the development of a smoother approach to native title negotiation. I think it is fair to point out at this stage that issues around native title and Indigenous land use agreements were possibly the most complex issues examined by the committee. Whilst a number of committee recommendations regarding ILUAs were not accepted by the government, there is at least a desire and intention on the part of the government to work with all key stakeholders towards a more streamlined agreement-making process, one where the negotiation and transaction costs are reduced for all parties involved. There is certainly an overwhelming body of evidence to support the need for reforming the ILUA process.

As I mentioned earlier, the government has already commenced implementation of some of the accepted recommendations. Several recommendations were made regarding the security of tenure for tourism leases, and it was very pleasing to be in attendance at the DestinationQ tourism conference recently when it was announced that reforms would be made to the Land Act 1994 to maximise the security of leasehold land tenure for tourism operators on offshore islands.

These reforms were the establishment of rolling leases for the term lessees; consolidation of adjoining term leases into existing perpetual leases; issuing of 50-year term leases for significant developments with an option for a further 49 years; conversion of existing term leases to perpetual leases where significant development has been completed; and short-term development lease for new significant developments with a legislative guarantee of long-term lease upon completion of a ~~alk~~ ~~i~~ ~~aj~~ ~~Pde~~ ~~e~~ ~~e~~ ~~j~~ ~~kk~~ ~~kk~~ ~~M~~ ~~aa~~ ~~hj~~ ~~k~~ ~~ei~~ ~~j~~ ~~kj~~ ~~aj~~ ~~aj~~ ~~e~~ ~~j~~ underlines the commitment of this government to a thriving four-pillar economy.

In closing, I would like to offer my thanks to my fellow members of the committee, with special mention of our chair, the member for Gympie, and our former chair, the member for Mirani. I also thank our committee staff for the many long days and sleepless weekends they spent helping us throughout this inquiry and in the preparation of the final report.

I commend the report to the House.