

PARTIAL REVOCATION OF STATE FOREST NOS 22, 29, 49, 36 AND 56

Motion

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

DR EDWARDS (Maylands) [7.05 pm]: The Opposition also supports this motion, which deals with the revocation of state forests Nos 22, 29, 49, 36 and 56. It is fair to say that this is a more complicated motion than the one that dealt with roads. This motion contains four proposals that affect five forests. I will comment on three of those proposals. The first area to be revoked is state forest No 22. The revoked area is to be sold to the landowner at market value. This is one of those interesting situations in which there has been a long history of a farmer using land that was state forest. This was officially discovered in 1984 and negotiations took place; however, it took until now to sort it out. About a week ago, I was with some people looking at a skateboard park that community members want to establish on land belonging to the City of Bayswater in my electorate. It is a sensible location near an industrial area and will not affect any residences. While we were standing at the site, the city engineer realised that the fence around a nearby business took off at an angle - it was constructed within a city reserve. That problem is similar to the one mentioned above. The City of Bayswater will now sort out that problem and, presumably, will allow the man to purchase the land that he quietly fenced and on which he has put wrecked cars.

Area two - state forest No 29 - is a land exchange proposal. Again, all these areas have interesting histories. In this case, a dam burst on a private property. The site the owner needed for a new dam must be revoked so that this can be formalised. In this, as in many of the other cases, an equal amount of land is swapped.

The most contentious revocation in this motion is that of area three - state forest 49 - which deals with 38.5 hectares, 10 kilometres north west of Pemberton. This will be excised and sold to an adjoining landowner; however, it is a land swap deal. This has been a long, drawn out process and goes back to when Labor was in Government. At that time, the then Labor Minister for Agriculture supported a proposal for a horticultural development, which involved the construction of a dam in state forest across an area called the Five Mile Brook. This was in state forest No 36. The dam was subsequently filled and state forest No 36 was inundated. A land exchange proposal was put forward, a bank guarantee was given and the land was cleared in 1990. It is now covered by water and kiwi fruit. Since then, for nearly 10 years, no property suitable for exchange has been found. It is now thought that the best course of action is for the excision to proceed, for the land to be sold at market value and for the Department of Conservation and Land Management to use the proceeds of the sale to buy cleared property upstream in the same catchment, to help protect that catchment.

This Government, and I presume the previous Labor Government, wanted this process settled more quickly, and perhaps it presents a lesson regarding the progress of these matters. All government departments have been consulted, and certain conditions about the clearing, rezoning and title amalgamation have been agreed with the landowner. The Labor Party supports this aspect of the revocation motion. Is it correct, minister, that the Margaret River airstrip is already included?

Mrs Edwardes: It has been for many years.

Dr EDWARDS: I thought so. The last area formalises the Margaret River airstrip arrangement and provides security for the local shire so that upgrading can take place. The Labor Party supports the motion.

MRS EDWARDES (Kingsley - Minister for the Environment) [7.11 pm]: I thank the member opposite for her cooperation. It is nice to have these matters resolved as some of them have been around for a long time. This process formalises the leases which have been in place. I thank the member for her comments.

Question put and passed.

On motion by Mrs Edwardes (Minister for the Environment), resolved -

That the resolution be transmitted to the Council and its concurrence desired therein.