

PRESS RELEASE
Carolyn Male MP
State Member for Glasshouse
glasshouse@parliament.qld.gov.au

Suite 1, 71 King Street
PO Box 1635
Caboolture Q 4510

Ph: 07 5495 2666
1800 555 016
Fax 07 5495 2586

19 April 2004

Hello everyone

Maleny Supermarket Site

It has been a very distressing time for Maleny due to the destruction of trees and habitat on the Obi Obi Creek site. I spent Wednesday and Thursday on site with Cr Dick Newman negotiating with the developer and departmental officials in relation to the clearing guidelines.

From the outset I believe that Cornerstone has acted in a manner that is contrary to good business and community outcomes, and has not had regard for due process in relation to applying for and receiving the correct permits to do work. These issues are still under investigation from both levels of government.

I understand that Cr Dick Newman will outline the issues in relation to the Caloundra City Council clearing permits.

Department of Natural Resources Involvement

Some people have complained that DNR did not mark out the top bank before the clearing went ahead.

I have spoken to the Minister and he has made it clear that the State has no obligation to map the bed and banks of every watercourse in the State, and indeed this would be prohibitively expensive.

Under the Water Act, as is normal in planning and development matters, the onus is on the developer to ensure they have the necessary permits and to undertake necessary surveys before interfering with vegetation in a riverine area.

The community cannot and should not carry that cost for developers. If a developer intends to interfere with vegetation it is their responsibility to check first.

If there is an allegation about illegal interference with vegetation in a riverine area the Department investigates and in establishing the extent of any breach, undertakes relevant surveys, as is normal practice. It may issue a notice to cease clearing while this complex process occurs.

As most people would realise, this is the eventual process that was carried out by DNR over those two days. They will be doing further investigations in relation to alleged illegal clearing within the riverine section.

Police Involvement

Police were contacted by Cornerstone, one week prior to clearing, who informed them that clearing would take place and they expected there would be a number of protestors.

The Sunshine Coast District Police made an operational decision to dispatch a large number of officers to ensure the safety of the demonstrators and the workers on-site. That was their primary role with their other role to prevent illegal trespass on to Cornerstone's site. The Police believed that all necessary permits were in place for the tree clearing.

I would recommend that anyone with concerns about the police actions – either with the number of officers or their treatment by officers - should raise them with Acting Superintendent Daryl Powell, District Officer, Sunshine Coast District on 5475 2444.

Workplace Health and Safety

The WH&S office is investigating the incident in which it is alleged that the contractors started cutting trees down whilst people were still climbing in the branches.

This is a serious matter and I will report progress on the investigation.

Parliament

Parliament is sitting for the next two weeks so I will be out of the office. If you have any concerns please ring Linda or Jo on 1800 555 016.

The following legislation was introduced at the last sitting of Parliament. This was the first sitting of the new Parliamentary term.

Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill – phases out broadscale clearing of remnant vegetation in Queensland by the end of 2006 and protects “of concern” regional ecosystems whilst allowing clearing for necessary management activities such as for fodder.

Duties Amendment Bill – implements transfer duty and mortgage duty concessions for first home buyers announced by the Government during the 2004 election campaign; raises the maximum purchase price for a full rebate of transfer duty on first home purchases from \$80,000 to \$250,000; implements a reducing transfer duty rebate for first homes costing between \$250,000 and \$500,000.

Until next week

Carolyn