17 October 2013

Today the Country Liberals Government passed amendments to the Pastoral Land Act (PLA). Pastoralists can now apply to run non-pastoral business enterprises on their land for thirty years.

Minister for Land Resource Management, Willem Westra van Holthe, said previously provisions for non-pastoral use of land under the PLA were restrictive and did not adequately allow for business diversification.

“The old non-pastoral use permits were restrictive in that they were only valid for a maximum of five years and were issued to the lease holder rather than the lease itself,” Mr Westra van Holthe said.

“This provided no protection or certainty for long-term economic enterprise.

“The new amendments will see the five year maximum permit be extended to thirty years with an option to extend for a further thirty years.

“Furthermore, non-pastoral use permits will be issued to the lease not the lease holder.

“This will pave the way for pastoralists to diversify their business and plan for the long term.

“A whole range of possibilities now exist: 4wd tracks, camping sites, forestry, food crops, aquaculture farms and the list goes on.

“After the live export cattle ban many pastoralists were struggling with decreased land values and cash flow. The ban effectively ended all revenue for pastoralists who were unable to diversify their businesses.

“These amendments will enable pastoralists to diversify their land rather than relying exclusively on the cattle industry. All the eggs will no longer have to be kept in one basket.

“People in the real estate industry have advised me that as this reduces risk and creates financial opportunity, pastoral lease values could increase by as much as 30%.

“The 30 year permit will also make finance and investment more likely.

“This is a landmark occasion for the Country Liberals Government; we will continue to support our pastoralists and economy.”

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