

Delbessie Agreement—land required for protected area estate

The Delbessie Agreement (State Rural Leasehold Land Strategy) is a Queensland Government initiative under the Blueprint for the Bush.

It provides a framework to support profitable and productive agricultural enterprises, and addresses the natural resource management issues challenging the management and use of state rural leasehold land.

The Agreement was signed in December 2007 at 'Delbessie'—a property north of Hughenden.

Acquiring land for the protected area estate

Occasionally, the government identifies the need to acquire leased land for inclusion in Queensland's protected area estate (e.g. national parks). It is recognised that the acquisition of land at the time of a lease renewal may adversely affect the grazing or agricultural enterprise concerned, so the Delbessie Agreement clarifies the process by which such land is identified and acquired for conservation purposes. (This is different from a leaseholder protecting an area on a lease for conservation purposes through a conservation agreement or covenant.)

Prior to a lease expiring

Where the government identifies land for the protected area estate and wishes to acquire it before the lease expires, it will:

- negotiate the purchase of all or part of the lease with the leaseholder
- pay the market value of the land and lawful improvements.

During the lease renewal process

Where the government identifies land for the protected area estate but has not negotiated its purchase with the leaseholder before the lease expires, at renewal it will:

- reserve the land required as a 'future conservation area' under the terms of the new lease (for transfer to the protected area estate in the future)
- offer a new lease for a period consistent with the *Land Act 1994* and the agreement.

When the renewed lease expires, a new lease will not be issued over the portion of land that was reserved as a future conservation area. However, compensation will be paid at the market value of any lawful improvements on the day the renewed lease expires.

During the term of the renewed lease

The leaseholder and the government may negotiate the purchase of lands prior to the expiry of the renewed lease.

With agreement, the government may purchase the required land at any time, with the price being that negotiated with the leaseholder, but guided by the residual market value of the expiring lease and any improvements.

Future conservation area

A future conservation area is an area that has been identified by or for the State as an area proposed to be dedicated under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* for a future national park or conservation tenure.

Management principles

The management principles for future conservation areas are that:

- any use of their natural resources (e.g. wildlife, soil, water, minerals and air) for agriculture or grazing is to be ecologically sustainable
- they are to be maintained predominantly in their natural condition
- their significant cultural and natural resources are to be protected.

'Ecologically sustainable' means that any agriculture or grazing is within the area's capacity to sustain natural processes while:

- maintaining the life support systems of nature
- ensuring the benefit of the use to present generations does not diminish the potential to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations.

'Cultural resources' are places or objects that have anthropological, archaeological, historical, scientific, spiritual or sociological significance or value, including such significance or value under Aboriginal tradition or Island custom.



Further information

Further information about the Delbessie Agreement is available on the Department of Environment and Resource Management website <www.derm.qld.gov.au>.

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Queensland Government call centre 13 13 04
or visit www.derm.qld.gov.au