

**MOOKA PASTORAL LEASE, PURCHASE BY DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND LAND  
MANAGEMENT**

*Statement*

**HON KEN BASTON (Mining and Pastoral)** [9.40 pm]: I, too, asked a question in the house today. My question was about the Mooka pastoral lease and the Kennedy Range National Park. For those members who do not know, the Kennedy Range National Park is some 150 kilometres east of Carnarvon and comprises 141 660 hectares of land. The Department of Conservation and Land Management recently purchased the Mooka pastoral lease, and in 2000-01 it also purchased parts of seven other pastoral leases. There is a proposal to attach those seven pastoral leases to the national park. I do not have a problem with that. It is a further area of 89 000 hectares. However, the Mooka lease is also 88 000 hectares. Once those areas are attached to the national park, although the Conservation and Land Management Act is not supposed to override the Minerals and Energy Research Act, it will depend on the government of the day as to whether it will allow mining in the national park. This area has had very little exploration and only recently have exploration licences been granted to companies, such as Herald Resources Ltd on 27 August 2004. A mining lease was granted in 2001 to someone who is mining mookaite. By the way, that area is the only place in the world where mookaite is found. It is a semi-precious gemstone used for jewellery and carving. There is also peanut wood there, which is a fossilised wood, again used by gem cutters. Peanut wood is found only on Mooka station. An exploration licence has also been granted to a company called Longreach Oil Ltd, which is exploring for oil and gas. Other mining leases were taken out by one company in 2000 and another in 2004. I believe Herald Resources is also looking for titanium there as well. The answer to my question today was that CALM was only considering what it would do with the Mooka lease. However, a web site, headed "Kennedy Range National Park and Proposed Additions: Draft Management Plan: 2005-2015", states that the recent purchases comprise the Mooka pastoral lease and seven other leases and that it is proposed to add them to the Kennedy Range National Park. If they became part of a national park, any application for future mining would have to go through both houses of Parliament; and we all know the delays involved in that. It is interesting to note that the web site states -

The CALM Act does not negate any of the powers of the *Mining Act 1978* or the *Petroleum Act 1967*.

However, it goes on to say that the government of the day does not allow mining in national parks. The point that I am making is that to continue to lock up areas that CALM has purchased is not the correct way to go. In this case it is convenient to tack that land on, and it continues some way from there. I believe this jeopardises the future flexibility of the area, which has had very little exploration carried out there up to this time.

I also believe that the Department of Conservation and Land Management has a problem with how it will handle all the pastoral lands that it has acquired. This is so if CALM includes this land as national park, as I believe that some of it recently became unallocated crown land and perhaps could be claimed back by anyone who wished to claim that land. If it is changed from unallocated crown land, it means a change of use under the future act provision for native title. Therefore, moving it from pastoral lease to national park could mean it would have to go through the Native Title Act.

I have raised this issue in the house because I believe that for the future of exploration alone, we need to keep this land flexible and not continue to lock it up.

*House adjourned at 9.46 pm*

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