

Ref CTS 02444/08

Mr N J Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Cnr Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to your letter of 28 February 2008 enclosing a copy of Petition No. 1015-08 lodged in the Queensland Legislative Assembly.

The Petition requests that the House declare an amnesty to allow leasehold landowners to convert from leasehold to freehold, taking into consideration that the last amnesty was declared in the 1990s.

The continuing strong growth of the Queensland economy in general, and the mining sector in particular, has produced strong investment demand in mining townships, which has translated into escalating real estate prices. The significant increases to unimproved land valuations in these towns reflect this strong market.

I am also aware that these large valuation increases are causing concern for lessees in many parts of the State. In the case of residential leases in township areas I am generally supportive of conversion of these leases to freehold title and would therefore encourage lessees to consider applying to convert their leases to freehold. Any lessee wishing to enquire about making such an application should seek assistance at their nearest office of the Department of Natural Resources and Water.

Under the *Land Act 1994*, if an application to convert to freehold is successful, the purchase price will be calculated at the date the application is received, as there is no legislative provision for using a valuation that may have applied at another time, whether before or after an application is made.

I have however asked my Department to advise on possible options for changes to legislation that could better facilitate conversion to freehold of such leases.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely

SIGNED

Craig Wallace MP
**Minister for Natural Resources and Water and
Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland**