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 23/10 '00 MON 15:10 FAX 07 49923189

WARREN ENTSCHE MP
 Jeff Seeneby

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THE Queensland

COALITION

THE NATIONALS AND LIBERALS — FOR QUEENSLAND'S FUTURE

MEDIA STATEMENT

Jeff Seeneby, MLA
 Shadow Minister for Mines and Energy
 23 October, 2000

Coalition Will Extend Daintree Power

The Queensland Coalition will develop proposals to extend the electricity supply that already exists north of the Daintree River despite the area being removed by the Labor Government last week from the distribution area of Ergon Energy.

Shadow Minister for Mines and Energy Mr Jeff Seeneby said that the Labor Government's decision reflected a long standing flawed policy position but showed an arrogant disregard for the outcomes of the Daintree Futures Study which it had itself part funded.

"Worse still it callously denies many people already living in the Daintree area on freehold land the hope of accessing the basic infrastructure of mains power which most other Queenslanders take for granted" he said.

"It is nonsensical to argue that the extension of mains power to people already living in the Daintree area would automatically destroy the environmental values of the area" Mr Seeneby claimed.

"These people have successfully lived there for many years and have had to endure third world conditions without electricity even though the supply is only a matter of metres away in some cases. It was obvious to me when I visited the area last month that the power supply issue is being used as a part of a larger strategy to curtail development in the area."

Mr Seeneby said the issue of managing future development needed to be considered separately.

"Development decisions are matters for the local Council but it is unfair and unjust to deny basic rights such as mains power to people who already live in the area especially when some of them including the local Mayor already have access to mains power" he said.

"The Coalition will be continuing to develop proposals to extend the electricity supply that already exists north of the Daintree River in a manner that recognises the environmental sensitivity of the area but also meets the fundamental right of people already living there to basic infrastructure."

The people of the Daintree area can be assured that the Coalition in Government will not abandon our responsibility to them to provide basic infrastructure and nor will we abandon our responsibility to protect the environmental values of the area which are the very reason they choose to live there" Mr Seeneby said.

"These responsibilities to the people of the Daintree and the Daintree environment are not and never have been mutually exclusive" he said.

For further comment phone: Jeff Seeneby 4992 2475

OFFICE OF THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION, ANNEXE LEVEL 6, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, BRISBANE, QUEENSLAND
 4000. TELEPHONE (07) 3406 7997 FACSIMILE (07) 3221 1498.

E-MAIL opposition@parliament.qld.gov.au
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