
Please also pass on the following to Bill:

PS:

For a long time I pondered on why Sterling would have bought Amburla. It seemed a really odd fit in with the other huge places he was involved with. The possibility I came up with last night may be absolutely way off reality, however it occurred to me that from north eastern Qld, trucks travelling from Chillagoe to Halls Creek could take more than 95% backroads - mostly exceedingly quiet roads, with relatively little traffic and almost no DPI offices (etc). I.e. from Chillagoe to Mt Garnet, down the Lynd junction road (Kennedy devel road) to Winton, then across to Boulia then Buntine-owned Tobermorey. Then onwards to Alice Springs via the Plenty/Donohue highway. Then to Buntine-owned Amburla, and up the Tanami to Halls Creek (then to live export ships at Wyndham or Buntine-owned Bedford Downs & other Warmun/Turkey creek cattle stations, as the case may be).

Wyndham live export loading was going to close, but I see they had their busiest loading ever last March:
<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/200904/s2535764.htm>

Of course this is a much longer and slower route than normally taken from one side of the country to the other, however I guess if the cattle are free, it'd be well worth the bother. It would also require having truck drivers in your pocket, but Peter Sherwin managed that and nobody talked, and Sterling would be well aware of how he operated, as previously mentioned. Of course this is just theorising, however there seem to be only a couple of staff on Tobermorey when I visited, and I did wonder about the appeal of it to Sterling, as well. Skeleton staff, and short-term blow-ins, would make it incredibly simply to avoid anyone joining the dots.

Bill I live in a bit of a cave, but noticed that 3 properties apparently owned by Sterling Buntine are on the market (Amburla, Tobermorey and Linda Downs). Maybe there are more, however as Amburla is the only one that publicly listed the vendor (Baldy Bay, trading as the Long Yard Trust - I'm surprised Sterling didn't ask them to keep his ownership quiet, as seems to be his habit), they aren't easy to find and verify.

Puzzled as to why there has been nothing in the newspapers about it. Since the AFR has shown interest in running stories on the subject before, maybe you may like to drop them a line so one of their journalists can join the dots and run a story about exactly what Sterling is selling (most of which, few people even know he owns)? (I could contact AFR, but of course they're more likely to take notice if you suggest it.)

Also wondering why Sterling Buntine has put these places on the market in the last couple of months (i.e., listed a fair while after Great Southern went leg up; around the time people started asking questions about nepotism etc). I guess if one was up to anything shifty, selling up would be one of the best ways of working on covering tracks. Although the recent Amburla ad had a whiff of sale-needed-soon about it.

Anyway presume you know about the selling of these places plus a lot more than the tiny bit I've got hold of, but thought I'd drop you a line just in case the property sales hadn't been obvious.

Fiona Lake

PS: Amburla is being sold bare of both plant and stock, which I'd have thought was unusual for the Alice Springs region, although apparently the purchase of 3,000 heifers can be negotiated with the vendor. I couldn't help wondering where they (or their forebears) would be sourced from, but I suppose everything is totally above board now that some people are taking notice.

It'll be interesting to see how many cattle actually turn up in the yards in the mustering of Wrotham Park.

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