



Speech by

Hon. HENRY PALASZCZUK

MEMBER FOR INALA

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PERFORMANCE OF MINISTERS

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries) (6.50 p.m.): Unfortunately, the stunt that the Opposition is indulging in tonight can only be described as an act of breathtaking hypocrisy. As part of a can-do Government, I have been doing the job that the Borbidge Government failed to do and I have been dealing successfully with the difficult issues that it left in the back paddock.

The deregulation of the dairy industry, which was started and not finished by the previous Government, was one of the first matters dealt with. Late last year, I brought legislation into the House to amend the Dairy Industry Act. That legislation embraced the broad aspirations of the industry. Chief among those was the preservation of the farm gate price. It also included the extension of market milk entitlements Statewide. That not only met the wishes of the dairy industry but also provided security and certainty for people who work in it and for rural communities. And I did that with the support of my able and dedicated staff.

In response to the outbreak of sugarcane smut in the Ord River district of Western Australia last year, I met the concerns of the Queensland sugar industry head on by forming and personally chairing the Sugarcane Smut Task Force. That eminent body of industry leaders, scientists and senior departmental officers is still playing an active role in protecting the interests of the Queensland sugar industry against the threat of sugarcane smut. In fact, the task force met at Parliament House this morning. That was achieved only with the help and the dedication of the staff in my office.

Another major concern for the \$2 billion sugar industry, especially in the far north, is the falling c.c.s. levels. This means that our sugarcane crops are losing their sweetness, with potentially disastrous long-term consequences. I took the initiative to put in place the Wet Tropics Cane Sugar Solutions project. This has given local producers a say in the direction and the application of research into the c.c.s. problem. However, with the industry facing a series of major ongoing issues, including falling world prices, I took the further step as Minister of putting in place an industry-wide body with direct access to Government at the highest levels.

At the end of last month, the Sugar Industry Development Advisory Council, known as SIDAC, held its first meeting. That body consists of representatives from across the industry, with every sugar-growing region in the State represented on it. It has given the sugar industry a level of access to Government that it has never had before.

This is a Government with its sleeves rolled up. It is making the hard decisions; it is not taking a step backward from any hard decisions. I have progressed the long-stalled Brands Act in order to get rid of the barbaric practice of cheek branding and rib branding, which damages hides and lowers their quality. This move is now being hailed by industry groups such as BIDAC as a great initiative. I have also initiated reviews of both the Meat Industry Act and the Fisheries Act.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr PALASZCZUK: Members opposite love hearing about this!

The review of the Meat Industry Act follows the appointment of an administrator to the QLMA in recognition of the parlous financial state in which the authority found itself thanks to the indecisiveness of the previous Government.

A review of the Veterinary Surgeons Act will commence shortly. In addition, I have obtained approval for the drafting of the Animal Care and Protection Bill to replace the archaic and wholly

inappropriate Animals Protection Act. I intend to introduce this Bill in the spring session of the Parliament.

I have expedited the development of the new Sugar Industry Bill following the delivery of the Sugar Industry Review Working Party's report last year. This impressive list goes on. I have commissioned a review of the Farm Produce Marketing Act 1964, under the chairmanship of former DPI director Roly Nieper. Following rounds of comprehensive consultation with industry and growers, I will be taking the proposal to Cabinet shortly.

One of my earliest decisions was to reverse the previous Government's nonsensical decision to set aside an early closure date for the Queensland Abattoir Corporation. I could not have done that without the help, dedication and ability of my staff. I could go on about this all night, but I will not do so. In conclusion, the honourable member for Crows Nest stands condemned for his disgusting attack on the honest and hardworking public servants employed in my office. The terms that he used were disgraceful and he stands condemned for what he has said.
