Speech by

Hon. HENRY PALASZCZUK

MEMBER FOR INALA

Hansard 25 August 1999

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Aquaculture Research

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries) (10.06 a.m.), by leave: Following the Community Cabinet meeting in Beerwah and Landsborough next week, I shall officially open extensions to the Department of Primary Industries' world-leading Bribie Island Aquaculture Research Centre. Aquaculture is widely regarded as one of Australia's fastest growing primary industries. In Queensland, the industry's economic development and environmental management is being underpinned by groundbreaking research, which is attracting significant international attention.

Under one of the projects under way at the research centre, scientists are evaluating the efficiency of using mullet and other finfish species to remove effluent from aquaculture operations. The project has begun with preliminary investigations into the breeding technology and larval rearing of sea mullet. The application and finetuning of this research offers to assist in the development of sustainable aquaculture in Queensland. Overseas trials have found that sea mullet are effective consumers of algae, plankton and prawn waste at low cost and with minimal maintenance. Fishers at Bribie Island collected mature mullet during its winter spawning migration.

Mr Santoro interjected.

Mr PALASZCZUK: The honourable member is a rude man.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation.

Mr PALASZCZUK: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The mullet are being held in brood-stock tanks at the research centre. With the development of this technology, tens of thousands of juvenile mullet are being raised to the fingerling stage and then transported and released into settlement ponds at various aquaculture farms. The potential of this project for both environmental management and resource efficiency of the aquaculture industry is exciting. But I understand that the project is expected to demonstrate that mullet, and other fish species, will consume algae and other waste material, converting it into a commercial fish crop whilst improving discharge water quality. This research is aiming to boost the economic potential of aquaculture, while preserving the environment—all thanks to the humble mullet.