



Speech by

Hon. HENRY PALASZCZUK

MEMBER FOR INALA

Hansard 26 August 1999

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Hoop Pine Industry

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries) (10.10 a.m.), by leave: This Government is committed to jobs and it is delivering on that commitment. For instance, the Government honoured that commitment in relation to the cypress pine industry, securing the jobs of more than 2,000 Queenslanders employed directly and indirectly in that industry. It was a commitment that the previous coalition Government would not give. In fact, under the Borbidge Government, jobs were lost in the cypress pine industry. Now, with a Government committed to jobs, the industry is looking at expansion with new jobs, new markets and new income for Queensland.

Therefore, it gives me great pleasure today to detail the Government's commitment to the State's hoop pine industry. Hoop pine is an Australian rainforest softwood grown extensively in Queensland forest plantations. It is a high-quality, strong and fine-grained timber used in high-value products, such as furnishings and home construction. Queensland plantations provide 14 hoop pine processors with 330,000 cubic metres of the timber each year, with major plantations in the Brisbane and Mary Valleys and in far-north Queensland. This hoop pine supply meets around 90% of world demand for the timber.

Following talks with industry, particularly the Queensland Timber Board, my department has been able to develop a support package for the industry. The Government is working cooperatively with the processing sector to reposition hoop pine as a premium timber species. The package includes a three-year freeze on the currently discounted price of hoop pine from State-owned plantations and embraced promotion of the timber to world markets. The price discounts are in the order of 25%. This will deliver price certainty to the industry, which is critical for industry investment and market repositioning programs with particular emphasis on markets in Asia and the Pacific rim.

This package is about delivering greater certainty to the hoop pine industry and delivering on the Government's commitment to jobs in rural and regional Queensland.
