



Speech by

Hon. HENRY PALASZCZUK

MEMBER FOR INALA

Hansard 15 September 1999

PRIMARY INDUSTRIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries) (2.45 p.m.), in reply: At the outset, let me thank all honourable members for their contributions. It is good to see that there is bipartisan support for primary industries in Queensland.

I would like to thank the honourable member for Crows Nest for the manner in which he has approached the passage of this Bill. It is good to see that the Department of Primary Industries and my office have briefed the honourable member, other members of the National Party and members of the One Nation Party, on this piece of legislation to ensure that everyone has a good knowledge of the substance of the Bill. I will not sum up what the various members have said in relation to the legislation, but I will make this commitment: I will correspond by mail with those who have raised important issues relating to their own electorates.

This Bill amends a number of Acts and shows the breadth of activities in which the Department of Primary Industries is involved. The amendments to the Chicken Meat Industry Act and the Grain Industry (Restructuring) Act demonstrate the DPI's role in facilitating industry development and structural adjustment. The amendments to those Acts will assist the competitiveness of those industries. My department's core vision is for a competitive and viable primary industries sector. These amendments contribute to that vision.

Another important fact about these amendments is that they have the agreement of the industry. My department and I work closely with industry at all times to ensure that the outcomes of legislative reviews are desirable from a policy perspective and are broadly acceptable to those affected by the changes. In both of these cases we have done that. At all times we want industry to be part of the process, not just affected by it.

The amendments with regard to fisheries demonstrate another key role of the DPI—namely, ensuring sustainable resource management. As members would be well aware, I am committed to ensuring that the structures and regulations that govern the use of the fisheries resource in Queensland are the best in the nation. I have initiated a review of the governance of fisheries.

This review is examining the division of responsibilities between the Queensland Fisheries Management Authority and the Fisheries Business Group of DPI, and the resourcing of both agencies. The outcome of this review will be a structure that delivers efficient, effective fisheries management in a way that is clear and transparent to those involved in the fishing industry. I have also launched a review of the Fisheries Act itself. This review will examine all aspects of how our State's fisheries are regulated.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Reeves): Order! The member for Hinchinbrook! The Speaker has reminded members of this Parliament not to have beepers or mobile telephones switched on in the House. This is the second time this has occurred during this debate.

Mr PALASZCZUK: Primarily, these amendments facilitate a national scheme that will stop black marketeering in abalone. The scheme also offers the prospect in the future of being used to protect fisheries resources in this State. It is all about ensuring that the resource is sustainably used. This is only fair on those who abide by the rules and do the right thing.

The creation of the new Brisbane Market Corporation will be facilitated by amendments in this Bill. The markets at Rocklea are an important asset for Queensland's growing horticulture industry. The new corporation will be about maximising the value of this asset for the industry. The corporation will

further develop a state-of-the-art facility which meets the needs of its tenants and users. This again demonstrates the DPI's role in providing strategic assistance to industry, be it through a publicly owned markets in this case, through research, development and extension, or assistance with market access.

My department is involved in promoting Queensland's rural industries in many different ways. The Meat Industry Act is also amended in this Bill. This Act is directed towards food safety and quality in this State's vitally important meat industry. The issue of food safety is one that is becoming increasingly important for primary industries generally, and for my department. Food safety is important not only for consumer protection but also for market access. Our exports depend vitally on satisfying overseas customers that our food is not only of the highest quality but is also safe.

In Queensland we have a clean, green image and my department is working to keep it that way. The amendments to the Meat Industry Act provide for better processes for appeals, which is in the interests of all those who hold accreditations under that Act. The amendments to the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act 1926 and the Fruit Marketing Organisation Act 1923 are all about helping two grower organisations become more flexible in their structure. The two organisations are Canegrowers and the Queensland Fruit and Vegetable Growers. In all, this Bill shows the wide scope of the department's responsibilities and activities.
