



Speech by

Hon. HENRY PALASZCZUK

MEMBER FOR INALA

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APPROPRIATION BILL
Estimates Committee G
Report

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries) (3.08 p.m.): In speaking to the report of Estimates Committee G, I will outline the Government's commitment to advance Queensland's food and fibre to the world. Under the 1999-2000 budget of the Department of Primary Industries, the Agency for Food and Fibre Sciences is being created. This delivers on our election commitment to create a world leading food and fibre science technology and innovation organisation. The Agency for Food and Fibre Sciences will strengthen Queensland's position as a world leader and innovator in food and fibre production. It will enhance consumer and market focus, deliver improved services to clients, and generate economic, social and environmental benefits to all Queenslanders.

I will address a few matters raised by the Opposition regarding the budget of the Department of Primary Industries. The 1999-2000 budget for the Department of Primary Industries is a cash appropriation of \$376m from all sources. There are no cutbacks in staff and no cutbacks in services. I am advised that this is some \$6m more than the coalition Government handed down as its DPI budget prior to last year's election.

I wrote a letter regarding the issue of the beef industry services, which appeared in today's edition of Queensland Country Life. Staff numbers at DPI's Queensland Beef Industry Institute increased from 203 to 216 under the Beattie Government. This increase was due to the appointment of eight trainees and several temporary, externally funded positions. The institute advises that it would have a staff number of 205 if all eight traineeships ceased without any of the trainees securing substantive positions and if some temporary, externally funded positions due to cease during the 1999-2000 year are not replaced by other temporary, funded positions supported by new projects.

In relation to the Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol, there is no reduction in the ability of the patrol to carry out its enforcement functions.

In relation to the Animal and Plant Health Service, the Estimates committee was advised of the service's budget with reference to the papaya fruit fly program. Kevin Dunn, the Executive Director of the DPI's Animal and Plant Health Service, told the committee about the wind down of the papaya fruit fly program due to its success. It was a national program, with funding from the Commonwealth and from each of the other States. The success of the program has seen a reduction in revenues from those sources.

I wish now to refer to another item in today's Queensland Country Life. Under the heading "Balanced budget fosters Smart State", Rob Lawrence from Hughenden stated—

"The way I see it, this Budget gives the opportunity for future prosperity and improved quality of life for all of us and is showing the way forward with real confidence."

I believe Mr Lawrence's comments are particularly applicable to the budget of the Department of Primary Industries and the State as a whole.

I now turn to the executive directors within the Department of Primary Industries, who I believe have taken on the challenge that the Government has issued to them in relation to putting together the Agency for Food and Fibre Sciences. The agency will be launched officially some time in early December. I believe it will become the catalyst for improved services from the Department of Primary

Industries for the primary sector in Queensland. The appointment of Director-General Warren Hoey has been like a breath of fresh air. He has been very well received by not only the clients of the Department of Primary Industries but also its staff throughout Queensland. He has a unique quality in that he is able to mix readily with both our clients and staff. In conclusion, this Government is about advancing the Department of Primary Industries through innovation, technology and extension.
