



Speech by

Hon. HENRY PALASZCZUK

MEMBER FOR INALA

Hansard 7 December 1999

TREE-CLEARING GUIDELINES

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries) (6.40 p.m.): In rising to support the Government's amended motion, I wish to take the time to highlight to the House the achievements of our Government in the area of primary industries. In doing so, I will be responding to a taunt made by the honourable member for Crows Nest, who asked: what useful things has the Government done for primary producers in Queensland? Therefore, I intend to highlight some of the great achievements of this Government in the area of primary industries.

Earlier today I launched the Department of Primary Industries new Agency for Food and Fibre Sciences. As per the Government's election commitment, the Agency for Food and Fibre Sciences will unite the research efforts of 1,400 DPI staff working in areas as diverse as biotechnology and climate forecasting through to farming systems. This year the agency will have a budget of about \$100m, which comes from Government and industry. The agency will deliver for Queensland and for future generations. Firstly, I inform the House that, by the year 2010, Queensland food and fibre industries will earn \$32 billion in gross revenue. That is a very significant increase on today's figure of \$12 billion. Secondly, by the year 2010, more than one fifth of Queensland's total work force will be employed in our food and fibre industries. That is a total of 500,000 jobs—almost twice the number that we have today.

This Government is progressing primary industries in this State. Industry is behind us and we are working together, as partners in progress, for a strong future for the food and fibre sectors. It would be impossible for me to detail all of the achievements, but I wish to place on record some of them so that the honourable members opposite will know what this Government is doing. For the sugar industry, we have delivered new legislation to set the framework for the future of Queensland's \$4.7 billion sugar industry and enhanced flexibility within the industry by retaining the single desk and giving greater control to local growers and millers to manage their own affairs. The Government also announced a \$1m Wet Tropics Sugarcane Solutions Project, which allows DPI scientists to work directly with growers and industry agencies to address the far-north region's declining sugar production.

In terms of climate research, this Government has progressed the world-leading forecasting regime, the Queensland Centre for Climate Applications, and thus generated tens of millions in extra income right across the State. Also, we are investigating the potential use of satellite technology for improved climate forecasting, which is already delivering productivity gains and boosting sustainable management practices for our farmers. This Government is also committed to the sustainability of our Queensland's fisheries, which is in the interests of all users of fisheries and the wider community.

Mr HOBBS: I rise to a point of order. This is totally irrelevant to the issue. Fishing—that is not tree clearing.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will decide that.

Mr PALASZCZUK: Opposition members are knockers and whingers. They never like to hear anything positive being done for our primary producers.

State Cabinet also approved an in-possession limit on prawns taken by unlicensed fishers. It imposed a 10 litre bucket limit for people fishing on Moreton Bay. Last month I announced that this summer more than 810,000 fingerlings would be released in 47 Queensland streams and dams across

the State under the State Government's Freshwater Recreational Fishing Enhancement Program. This Government is also delivering security to the cypress pine timber industry— one of the most decentralised timber industries in the world. The cypress pine industry already earns \$30m per annum for the State and is a major employer in western Queensland. In terms of food safety, this Government is set to become a national leader in food safety for the three high-risk animal protein sectors—meat, dairy and seafood. Queensland will lead the field following Cabinet's approval of a proposal for the establishment of a new agrifood authority in this State. The Government is also ever vigilant to the threat of pests and diseases. Along with industry, the Government has implemented a number of protective measures for the Queensland sugar industry following the outbreak of sugarcane smut in Western Australia last year. Meanwhile, Australia's most successful exotic plant pest campaign reached a climax in May with the declaration of the eradication of papaya fruit fly in far-north Queensland. This Government has also overseen a \$5.3m upgrade of the DPI's Tick Fever Research Centre at Wacol, which was officially opened in August. It begins a new era in Queensland's century-old campaign against tick fever, which costs the State's livestock industries up to \$28m per year.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr PALASZCZUK: Opposition members do not like good news. This is all good news and there will be more good news coming. The Government has established an information and inspection centre at Coen, on the Cape York Peninsula, that has become the front-line defence in the State's ongoing war against exotic animal pests and diseases.

In conclusion, the honourable member for Callide should listen and learn from what this Government is doing. This morning I listened to the honourable member for Callide speaking about the importance of primary industries in this State. He claimed that this sector is very important to his electorate. I would like to know how he can explain to his constituents that, of all the 89 members of this House, he has made fewer than a dozen representations to me since I became the Minister for Primary Industries 17 months ago. Where is his interest in primary industries? The honourable member for Callide is all huff and puff. If, as expected, he does join the front bench this week, it will be more reflective on the sheer dearth of talent in the coalition than on the member's ability. I hope he can respond to me directly about the fact that he has made fewer than one dozen representations to me over the past 17 months.
