



Speech by

CATE MOLLOY

MEMBER FOR NOOSA

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PEST MANAGEMENT BILL

Ms MOLLOY (Noosa—ALP) (2.48 p.m.): I rise in support of the Pest Management Bill. There are always concerns for those who work with potentially hazardous chemicals. This legislation goes a long way toward protecting the health and wellbeing of our community and of those who work with chemicals to control pests.

Under the current regulatory system for pest management technicians, there is no requirement that pest management activities by the state should be undertaken by licensed technicians. This bill binds the Crown and requires the use of licensed pest management technicians. Alternatively, it requires government agencies to seek an exemption from the licensing requirements in the bill. Exemptions from the requirement to use licensed pest management technicians will be given only after a thorough assessment of the risk posed to public health by the pest management activity. Therefore, the bill assists to ensure the continued safety of pest management activities undertaken by government agencies.

A recent *Courier-Mail* article of 4 December 2001 refers to the use of two chemicals as part of fire ant eradication under the banner 'Health Risk Warning From Fire Ant Baits'. There are two forms of treatment used for fire ants. The primary form of treatment is broadcast baits, which are comprised of small pieces of corn grits about one to three millimetres in size, coated with soybean oil and an insect growth regulator—either S-methoprene or pyriproxyfen—or the metabolic growth inhibitor, hydramethylnon. Initial treatments to residential and commercial properties will comprise a fifty-fifty blend of an IGR and hydramethylnon. Follow-up treatments will be with baits that contain an IGR only. The second chemical, chlorpyrifos, is used only on a limited basis for treatment of nuisance mounds.

The article notes that products for indoor application of chlorpyrifos have recently been banned in Australia because of the risks associated with its indoor use. While chlorpyrifos is being used in the fire ant program, it is only used outdoors and only when considered necessary to treat nuisance mounds that have been assessed as posing a health risk to nearby residents and others. Its use in specific nest treatments should not be confused with indoor use of the same chemical where exposure is likely to be higher. It is important to recognise that some of the chemicals used in pest management do present a risk and must be used carefully and only in safe and appropriate ways.

The methods of use of both chemicals in the fire ant control program have been carefully evaluated. Queensland Health has concluded in relation to chemicals in the broadcast baits that the estimated level of human exposure that might occur among the general community during the fire ant control program is very low and is probably negligible. Based on the best available toxicological information, it could not be expected to pose a public health risk.

While it is currently not necessary for government agencies to use licensed pest management technicians, it is Queensland Health's assessment that the methods of use of chemicals in the fire ant control program are safe. Programs of pest management undertaken by government agencies will fall within the scope of the bill unless they are excluded under clause 7. Exemptions include most pest management activities in primary production and pest management relating to growing lawns at bowling greens and other sport venues.

In addition, the bill provides for other limited exemptions to be made by regulation. Importantly, an exemption may be made only if the pest management activity could reasonably be expected to

pose no risk or only a negligible health risk. The bill will support continuation of safe and competent pest management activities in the public as well as the private sector.

This is an accountable government. When it comes to pest management and, specifically, to ensuring that government staff use chemicals in a regulated way, the Beattie government will ensure that the health and safety of the community and the environment are not compromised through the delivery of this legislation.
