



Speech by

Hon. HENRY PALASZCZUK

MEMBER FOR INALA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Fire Ants

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities) (10.04 a.m.), by leave: I would like to update the House on the progress of the fire ant eradication campaign in Brisbane. I can report today that more than 20,000 properties have been treated as part of the initial treatment. Again I acknowledge the cooperation the public has given officers of the Department of Primary Industries' Fire Ant Control Centre. I have always maintained that strong public support and awareness will be critical to the success of the campaign. More than 50,000 consent-to-treat forms have been received. The Department of Primary Industries has received more than 30,000 calls to its call centre regarding the fire ant.

The fire ant program will soon be operating out of three locations. Operations have already been established in Oxley, as the headquarters and management of the operational activities, and in Wacol for laboratory and storage. I am advised that a new office in Northgate will be established for managing the treatment of the north-eastern area.

In addition to eradication, surveillance is ongoing. I can now further advise the House that surveillance has detected an additional two fire ant infestations—one in Regents Park in the Logan City area and another at Lytton. The detection of fire ants at Regents Park is about two kilometres outside the treatment zone but within the 100 per cent surveillance zone. There have been five surveillance teams working in the Logan City area, and these activities have intensified. I am advised that no further infestations have been found in the neighbouring area to this detection. The detection at Lytton is approximately 600 metres outside the treatment zone but is also within the 100 per cent surveillance zone. No further infestations have been detected in the neighbouring area to this detection.

We expect and are prepared for further detections of fire ants as the eradication and surveillance work continues. This highlights the importance of the surveillance work we are undertaking. It is important to remind all honourable members that the infestations remain generally confined to two areas—in the city's south and at the mouth of the Brisbane River. The task of eliminating the fire ant is very difficult, but we are determined to achieve our goal of eradicating the fire ant for good.
