



Speech by

Mr T. MALONE

MEMBER FOR MIRANI

Hansard 29 May 2001

WEED ERADICATION

Mr MALONE (Mirani—NPA) (11.45 p.m.): Queensland land-holders have been left to deal with major weed infestations such as parthenium weed, rubber vine and lantana without government assistance as the Beattie government stalls on the take-up of its share of the \$12 million available from federal government funds. This is despite the fact that Queensland was affected by nine of the 20 weeds identified nationally as among the most important to bring under control. The Queensland Government has failed to take up the federal government funding to tackle the weeds of national significance.

Weed infestation is a serious problem in my electorate, as it is in a lot of other electorates, where the impact reduces farm and forest productivity, displaces native species and contributes to land degradation. Farmers and graziers in most electorates throughout Queensland, and particularly in my electorate, are frustrated by the regrowth of lantana, which is one of the weeds of national significance. However, under the Vegetation Management Act they are prevented from using the necessary machinery to eradicate lantana. This, in turn, is creating a habitat for wild dogs, pigs and feral cattle, which could lead to a disastrous situation in the advent foot-and-mouth disease, if that ever came to pass.

The fact that funding is available from the federal government under the National Weeds Program and that the Queensland Labor government has failed to take advantage of the program or lodge, as I understand it, a funding application is a disgrace. I urge the Minister for Natural Resources to do something fairly quickly.

It has been nearly two years since the 20 weeds of national significance were agreed to by the state, territory and federal ministers responsible for agriculture, resource management, forestry and the environment. It is pretty obvious that the Labor government has placed a low priority on weed eradication in Queensland. It pains me to say that. I have written to the Minister for Natural Resources, asking him to fund full-time weed control officers in the Mirani and Sarina shires in my electorate.

Only tonight I received a call from an irate farmer who had applied to the Parks and Wildlife Service to eradicate wallabies that were overrunning his property. He was denied a permit to shoot those animals. The cost to him will be very significant as the cane emerges from the ground. If the public of Queensland wish to have wallabies and other animals running around the state, as taxpayers they should contribute towards helping farmers—or whoever—who suffer the losses that are inherent in having dingoes, feral wallabies or pigs—

A government member: Feral wallabies?

Mr MALONE: They are feral. Has the member ever seen one? The overrunning of properties by wild animals should be compensated by taxpayers.
