



Speech by

Mrs D. PRATT

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

Hansard 7 August 2002

KILCOY PASTORAL COMPANY MEATWORKS

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (11.53 p.m.): As a consequence of federal minister Truss's formula with regard to US export quota allocations, the viability of the KPC abattoir at Kilcoy is once again threatened. The news recently of the closure of the Lakes Creek plant at Rockhampton had a devastating effect on Rockhampton's population of 60,000, with the loss of 700 jobs. Imagine the effect of the KPC closure at Kilcoy on a population of 3,300 with the loss of 350 jobs. It would be the death knell of this small country town.

Council is no longer prepared to accept the dictums of uninformed public servants that in the past have seen the decimation of the once flourishing timber industry, the severe restriction of the dairy industry, which was once buoyant in the area, and the cattle industry, one of the few remaining industries viable in the area. The closure of the KPC abattoir would end that. It is understood that KPC is seeking an allocation of 2,000 metric tonnes of discretionary US quota in order to remain viable.

I ask the ministers for trade and agriculture in the state of Queensland to show their intention to fight for the survival of this and other meatworks by pursuing the federal government to achieve the necessary quota for these works to survive. For the people of Kilcoy the issue has, and always will be, the survival of this one industry that the entire town has relied on for so long. This town has worked through its problems together in the past—the company, the workers, the local government, the associated businesspeople; in fact the entire town—to resolve these issues. They recognised the problem was bigger than themselves as individuals. Now the federal government has put this hurdle in their way.

For the past 50 years, the Kilcoy Pastoral Company has been a major employer in the area, and for the past 20 years the company has played a pivotal role in the economic stability of the shire of Kilcoy. Taking these facts into account, council has invested considerable sums in infrastructure to provide secure water supply to the company's abattoir to ensure the requirements of the relevant authorities can be met to allow the company to support its export markets. The company is the major employer in the area, providing in excess of 350 jobs, as I said before. Not only does the majority of the resident work force work for the company; most of the town's businesses rely either directly or indirectly on the company for business and employment of their staff.

Since 1957, when the Kilcoy Pastoral Company pioneered the export trade to America, the company has exported a significant amount of its product. The company has also been diligent in developing alternative markets in South-East Asia as well as continuing its major supply arrangements in the US trade. After having experienced the trauma associated with the threat of closure of the KPC meatworks on an entire town and its surrounding districts not so long ago, I feel for the people at Lakes Creek. It is not an easy situation to go through, and the misinformation that we all hear in this place can be detrimental to resolving issues, especially when the whole truth is not delivered and interested parties convey only the information necessary to achieve their own ends. Once again, I ask the ministers for trade and agriculture to put their views on the line.
