



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR PUMICESTONE

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RURAL INDUSTRIES RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION RURAL WOMEN'S AWARDS

Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (10.18 a.m.): I would like to give members a brief insight into a Department of Primary Industries initiative that has been successfully operating over the past four years—the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation Rural Women's Awards. These awards recognise the incredibly valuable contribution women make to Australian agriculture through supporting projects that will deliver lasting benefits to the rural sector. I was delighted to represent Minister Henry Palaszczuk at this year's presentations to announce the winner and runner up. There were 17 entries, and the three finalists were Desley Vella, Georgie Hinchley and Teena Mammino.

On her Babinda cane farm, Desley proposes to restore a cane cutters barracks into a museum documenting the social and cultural history of the sugarcane industry. Proceeds from this awareness exercise will fund environmental rehabilitation work on the farm. A tourism experience will follow with the provision of picnic spots in revegetated riparian zones and low impact walking trails adjacent to the World Heritage listed forests and wetlands.

Georgie is a Bingle Bay fruit grower committed to her Tahitian lime orchard. Her project's focus is on the manufacture of marmalades, jams, dressings, chutneys, cordials and biscuits from second grade Tahitian limes. She plans to incorporate eco-tours of the property and packing shed. Over the past 12 months she has been trying new ways to minimise the use of chemical sprays, and part of the property has been revegetated with native trees, including a wetland water catchment area, to reduce the threat of nutrient run-off onto the Great Barrier Reef.

Teena is a sugarcane farmer in the Burnett region. Her focus is diversifying from sugar and macadamia production to ice-cream making and tourism on the family property. The nuts are now grown in a 100 per cent chemical-free environment and the cane is green harvested. She plans to eventually export her ice-creams overseas.

To say that I was impressed with the projects is an understatement. I am proud to have met these ladies and, although there could be only one winner on the day—that was Desley, who receives a \$15,000 bursary—I know that the state is the real winner. These women are indeed an inspiration to rural Queensland.