



Speech by

Pat Purcell

MEMBER FOR BULIMBA

Hansard Tuesday, 28 September 2004

PLANT PROTECTION BILL

Mr PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (3.09 p.m.), continuing: I take up where I left off the other day in addressing the concerns that the state, the growers, pastoralists and other primary industry producers have in regard to the eradication of certain diseases that may occur in crops and animals from time to time. Some sections of the community have criticised the government about the action that it has taken. Unfortunately, those individuals do not look at the broader picture and the results of their actions. Although it can be devastating to individuals at times, mechanisms are in place to assist them if they are caught up in natural disasters, including the discovery of diseases on their farms or in their crops. We need to be able to monitor regularly, efficiently and accurately for the presence or absence of pests, and that is what this legislation will do. The current laws do not allow this and we are rectifying that today. We need to ensure that after eradication there is continued surveillance of the affected area.

The most fundamental issue is the need for keeping and being able to produce relevant movement records. That is very important if there is a reinfestation, as that reinfestation could then be tracked down and the problem sorted out. We must make available important information about an infestation to enable the timely tracing of movements to the host plant. All of this combined will go a long way towards the eradication, prevention and control of whatever disease or animal needs to be traced. Those are very simple words—prevention, eradication and control—but they are very important.

One can only hope that this legislation will ensure that the department does not have the problems that it had recently, so that industries will not be devastated and growers and producers will not be disadvantaged by the department not being able to act swiftly when problems arise. Our island nation of Australia is clean and green, and our merchandise has a very good reputation overseas. I support the bill.