



Speech by

Hon. Tim Mulherin

MEMBER FOR MACKAY

Hansard Thursday, 4 June 2009

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Native Salad Industry

Hon. TS MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland) (10.22 am): An Aboriginal community near Hervey Bay is working on an exciting new project that could create a new native salad industry. Queensland Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries staff have worked closely with the Butchulla people from the Dhugamin corporation to plant four native salad varieties at Scrub Hill. The native plants are warrigal greens, which taste and look like spinach; native violet, which has edible white and purple flowers that can be used as a salad garnish; scrambling lily, which is like a cross between asparagus and snow peas; and sea celery, which is a small ground cover and which tastes like celery.

Mr Lawlor: Have you tried all these things?

Mr MULHERIN: Not yet. This project has the potential to significantly change the way Queenslanders think when it comes to salad. We hope that sometime soon Queenslanders will be regularly including native salads in their daily meals and that they will add a new dimension to restaurant menus and supermarket salad sections.

Our scientists have named the new product the All Australian Salad and I am advised this is the first time this type of produce has been cultivated for commercial purposes in Queensland. This one-year pilot, if successful, will be expanded to other sites. The Butchulla people have welcomed this project as something that can really assist their community and the Bligh government is pleased to be in partnership.

The initiative by the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation aims to increase Indigenous participation in the blossoming bush foods industry. It falls under the added-value convenience products program, which is looking at ways of improving a range of food products and native salad will be just one of its product lines. This collaboration highlights the Bligh government's determination to diversify the economy and provide new opportunities for Indigenous Queenslanders. It also highlights the Bligh government's expertise in research, its emphasis on business growth and marketing and the positive impact primary industries are having on the economy.