



Speech by


**Tim Mulherin**

**MEMBER FOR MACKAY**

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## AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY

 **Mr MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.20 pm): Last week saw the release of the biggest puff piece of policy the agricultural sector in Queensland has seen. *Queensland's agriculture strategy: a 2040 vision to double the value of production* was launched by the agriculture minister to little fanfare. The 2040 vision was the centrepiece of the LNP's agriculture election commitment, yet the 16-page document is one long motherhood statement. It offers no insight into how the LNP government plans to support the agriculture industry. It does not outline what the growth of different sectors will be. It does not even talk about the types of product it is aiming to grow.

There is some talk in the strategy about the importance of a strong biosecurity framework, yet the minister and the LNP government have closed every biosecurity laboratory outside of Brisbane, leaving regional Queensland exposed to an increase in pest and disease outbreak. The document mentions logistics but offers no plans on how the LNP will drive innovation and growth in this vital part of the agriculture supply chain. The paper mentions improved infrastructure including road, rail and ports, but there is no way an LNP government can achieve this as it has offered not one new infrastructure idea since coming to government.

The so-called vision for 2040 does not even talk about what the agriculture market will look like in 2040, and there is no analysis of population pressures versus arable land. As an example of the vacuousness of this document, I table for the House page 14.

*Tabled paper:* Document titled '2040 Target: Double Production' [[1711](#)].

It shows one of the enlightening diagrams included in the paper about how this 2040 vision will be achieved. You see resource availability going right, productivity going down, production costs going left and markets going up, and in the middle is blurry double vision. What a load of rubbish! I can understand why this piece of puff went down so badly with industry when it was launched last Monday. Dan Galligan from the Queensland Farmers Federation said there basically was not enough information included in this document for them to work with. He said in APN newspapers—

... much more will be required beyond what is outlined in the discussion paper if we are to see this process move to a truly collaborative and strategic action plan, beyond just more analysis.

It is a pretty scathing response from the peak agricultural body in Queensland. AgForce even admits in *Queensland Country Life* that the LNP's agricultural election commitments were purely to shore up the rural vote, with little follow-through on commitments.

In contrast, I take the opportunity to point out that this time last year, as the previous agriculture minister, I launched Food for a Growing Economy, the first food industry plan in Australia. It was a landmark plan which would have more than doubled the value of Queensland's food sector by 2020. So instead of doubling production by 2040, as the LNP aims to do, we were more than doubling the value of the sector in half the time. Any farmer will tell you that they would rather have their product worth more

than produce more of it. But it is obvious that the LNP paper has been produced without actually talking to anyone. Food for a Growing Economy, released last year, actually included tangible outcomes.

To create growth and meet opportunities, productivity must increase. Fundamental to productivity growth is research, development and extension taken up at the business level in the form of innovation. That is why, in conjunction with the food policy, we established a \$2 million Food Innovation and Productivity Incentives Program to encourage food industry innovation and productivity. Similarly last year, through consultation with all interested stakeholders during the live export issue, we recognised that the common issue was that greater certainty and long-term security in the industry were needed to drive profitability and productivity. So we established three working groups to address these issues: market access and productivity, multimodal transport, and regulation reform.

The LNP also needs to recognise Queensland's status as an emerging biohub and continue our commitment to developing biotechnology industries and ensuring the state's clean energy future. By 2020 Queensland should be recognised as a leader in the production of biobased industrial products and technologies in the Asia-Pacific region. When in government we anticipated that the sector would contribute up to \$1 billion to our clean and sustainable economy. Biobased products are playing a pivotal role in transitioning a global fossil fuel dependent economy to a cleaner, greener alternative, yet there is no mention of biobased products in the LNP paper.

When in government our plans were always developed through extensive consultation with industry and the community. I suggest that the minister and the LNP engage with the agriculture industry and the community before releasing a flimsy document with no analysis of any sector and definitely no vision for the future.

*(Time expired)*