




Speech By
Michael Hart

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

Record of Proceedings, 6 March 2014

BIOSECURITY BILL

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (12.29 pm): I rise in support of the Biosecurity Bill 2013 introduced to the parliament by the Hon. Dr John McVeigh, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and member for Toowoomba South. The long promised consolidation of state legislation into a single biodiversity act is now being realised, which is something that the former Labor government failed to do. The Biosecurity Bill 2013 is another example of the Newman government's commitment to outcome focused regulation and cutting red tape.

It is important to highlight the priority for this side of the House for our system of governance to be effective, efficient and to continually improve, review and build upon our regulation to ensure it is flexible, adaptable and responsive to community needs. We must adopt a regulatory approach based on best practice or industry needs, and this bill builds on that objective.

This bill was referred to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee after its tabling by the minister in November 2013. During the committee's wide-ranging hearings on this bill, one of the many opinions offered was that of Dan Galligan, Chief Executive Officer of the Queensland Farmers Federation. In his opening statement to the inquiry he noted the importance of imposing biosecurity obligations right across-the-board. This bill will streamline relevant regulation into a single act; it will repeal six acts; subsequently amend three other acts; repeal 10 sets of regulations and part of one other regulation; and it will cut red tape by approximately 150 pages. We have all heard that there are 90,000 pages of red tape in this state, and red-tape reduction is something that this government has been focusing on over the two years since we have been elected. This bill will reduce the page count by more than 20 per cent compared to the corresponding provisions in current legislation.

Fees will in fact be rationalised, with the total number of fees being reduced from 87 to 37—another form of red-tape reduction. New permit schemes will reduce the number of different permits compared to the existing biosecurity legislation. A proposed generic health certificate under the bill will replace the existing certificates for health for stock, certificates for bees and insurance certificates for plants under current biosecurity legislation. This streamlining will reduce the regulatory burden for stakeholders as well as reducing the administrative burden for government. The bill will provide a more comprehensive range of response tools and associated powers that enhance the capability and flexibility for front-line resources to mitigate risk through effective preparedness, prevention, surveillance, emergency response and ongoing management programs.

It is important to maintain market access and develop new markets for the world-class, disease-free status of many of our agricultural products. It is vital to the progrowth aspirations and competitiveness of our agriculture industries. While I have a relatively small suburban electorate in terms of area with no farming areas as such, biosecurity is something that, in reality, would affect all of us if effective biosecurity measures are not put in place. I support this bill because it will facilitate growth to one of the core pillars of our economy, agriculture, and help achieve our goal of doubling agriculture production at the farm gate by 2040. We have a great state with great opportunities; let us keep it that way.