



Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

Record of Proceedings, 10 November 2016

MOTION: MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

Ms LEAHY (Warrego—LNP) (6.11 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Burdekin and say how good it is to have a shadow minister for agriculture and fisheries in the LNP shadow cabinet—unlike the vacant position in the Palaszczuk cabinet. It has been a week since the Labor government's former agriculture minister resigned and, true to form, the do-nothing, know-nothing Palaszczuk government has not appointed a new one. The agriculture and fisheries department is responsible for administering \$453 million of taxpayers' money. Until a new minister is appointed, valuable time is being wasted and—

Mr SPEAKER: I apologise, member for Warrego, for interrupting you. Minister for Police and Corrective Services and member for Southern Downs, I would urge you to take your conversations outside or you will be warned.

Ms LEAHY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Until the new minister is appointed, valuable time is being wasted and the department is on hold. We know the acting minister will do his best with his now super portfolio responsibilities. We on this side of the House worry: will the minister have time to deal with it all? Will he have the time to stand up and support 90,000 jobs in agriculture, fisheries and forestry? Will he have the time to stand up for a \$15 billion industry? We worry about you, Acting Minister. Agriculture supports 30,000 businesses and earns \$4.5 billion in exports for the state. This Labor government is not interested in these businesses or the export earnings. It does not even care enough to appoint an agriculture minister.

Yesterday we heard disgraceful comments from the Minister for Trade in relation to the President-elect of the United States of America. At the very least the Minister for Trade should apologise to the farmers and processors for her comments because this country's international trade relationships are vital to businesses across rural and regional Queensland, including in my electorate. For instance, the goat industry is a quarter of a billion dollar industry, with 70 per cent of goat meat being sold to America. That is an extremely important export revenue stream to my electorate and other parts of regional Queensland. It is outrageous to hear the trade minister potentially jeopardising our very important international trade relationships.

This government just does not care about regional and rural Queensland, and nor does it care about agricultural industries. It just wants to take the revenue produced by these industries. It does not want to give anything back. It does not want to invest in water infrastructure like the Rookwood Weir, the schools and the roads in particular and it ties businesses up in green tape. Let us take, for instance, Cross River Rail. Some \$50 billion was allocated in this year's budget before the legislation was even introduced for the establishment of the Cross River Rail Delivery Authority. One month's interest on this money could have provided enough funds to address the serious safety issues on the Meandarra Talwood Road in my electorate, one where there is a daily school bus run on that road. I will keep fighting for long-term funding commitments for this road that conveys millions of dollars worth of grain

to market and cattle to market. I want more than bandaids for this road and the many other roads across regional and rural Queensland. They are the lifeline to our export industries and our ports, and they continue to be neglected by this do-nothing, build-nothing Palaszczuk government, which cannot even make a decision to appoint an agriculture minister. In relation to cluster fencing—

Opposition members interjected.

Ms LEAHY: I take the interjections from the member for Gregory and the member for Toowoomba South. The Premier announced an additional \$5 million on 1 May in Barcaldine for cluster fencing. Six months later, we are waiting for money to hit the ground in Western Queensland. Do we have to wait six months for a new agriculture minister as well? Six months seems to be the common sort of time frame with agriculture and this government. We know the acting minister is just as disappointed with the government dragging the chain on this promise. Minister, it is time to stop the delays and roll out the money and stop neglecting rural and regional communities. It is high time the agricultural industries in regional and remote Queensland were valued by this Labor state government and an appointment was made. I commend the motion moved by the member for Burdekin to the House.