




Speech By  
**Glenn Butcher**

**MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 August 2016

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL**

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (7.55 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion that the Agriculture and Environment Committee's report No. 20 on the 2015-16 budget estimates be adopted. The committee recommends that the proposed expenditure for the committee's area of responsibility as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2016 be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

I would like to thank my fellow committee members for their contributions and questions of the ministers and staff during our day and evening of estimates hearings a few weeks ago now. It was our privilege to welcome the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef to appear before us in our public hearing. I congratulate both ministers on their impressive attention to detail and knowledge of their portfolios which greatly assisted the committee in its deliberations. I also thank the directors-general, deputy directors-general, the CEOs and their advisers for their professionalism during the hearings.

I know how much work goes into preparing for these hearings and I make special mention of the ministers' staff for their efforts in preparing for the day. I need to make special mention of our committee secretariat, particularly research director Mr Rob Hansen but also Paul Douglas, principal research officer, and Marion O'Connor, our committee support officer, for their work. I thank them for their extremely capable assistance which ensured a smooth running of proceedings.

I was pleased to hear from the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries that the support to provide counselling services and other drought relief measures would continue; in addition establishing the Queensland Climate Risk and Drought Resilience program to improve farm business capacity, seasonal forecasting and decision support tools to better manage climate risk. Another great initiative mentioned during the hearings was the Rural Assistance Package aimed at reducing financial sustainability to assist the sector service their debt.

I was also pleased to hear that the minister is continuing to support agriculture industries in reef catchments to improve Great Barrier Reef water quality which is vitally important, particularly in my electorate with the southern Great Barrier Reef just off my doorstep. That will be supported by coordinating on-ground support services, including extension capacity building and specialised extension services such as economic analysis to support the industry led best management practice programs. It also includes validating improved management practices against specific criteria, monitoring the adoption of these practices by producers and funding innovation for new technologies such as developing a spray rig for the precision application of herbicides.

Under Biosecurity Queensland, I was pleased to see an additional \$10.8 million over four years allocated to improve the capabilities of Queensland's biosecurity systems. For my North Queensland colleagues, the investment of \$7.3 million for the ongoing management of Panama disease tropical race 4 in bananas should be most welcomed. As the chair of the committee that reported on the illegal

puppy farming bill, I was pleased to hear that an extra \$500,000 per annum would be allocated to the RSPCA to ensure adequate regulatory compliance with new dog breeding provisions.

The portfolio of environment in particular has a huge bearing on my electorate. I commend the minister for his continuing support for the implementation of the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan and the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan. With the southern Great Barrier Reef right on our doorstep, as I mentioned before, it is vitally important that work and investment in our reef continues.

Another exciting prospect for Gladstone is the future biofuels industry. I welcome the minister's announcement of an additional \$1.1 million to develop a best practice regulatory framework and enhanced compliance and licensing activities for Queensland's new biofuels industry, which is happening right on my doorstep as we speak, and a further \$140,000 to implement the biofutures road map and action plan. I know that often a lot of rubbish gets spilled around here, so it was great to hear that the minister has allocated \$1.9 million to facilitate improved waste management and resource recovery to help grow the waste management industry and improve associated employment opportunities.

To finish off, I welcome the minister's action in coming up with new ideas and innovations for national parks. I am not a big fan of Pokemon Go, but I have seen many people of all ages walking around my electorate, searching for those elusive little critters. I think this will be a great initiative to get people into our parks, enjoying the fresh air and wonderful rainforests, even if they are hunting for pokemon. I commend the bill to the House.