




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR LOGAN

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**AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE: REPORT, MOTION TO
TAKE NOTE**

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (12.14 pm): As a former member of the Agriculture and Environment Committee I did do some of the work and attended some of the hearings that led to this report. I had to speak in this debate because I noticed that many on the other side set the false dichotomy that one side supports the farmers and the other side is against them. That is simply not true. As the grandson of a cattle farmer and someone who deeply values our agricultural industry, I think that this false dichotomy is damaging to our agricultural sector.

I know that the regions to our north value the reef and the farmers especially value the economic ecosystems around them. They recognise that they can have an impact on that. However, those on the other side did not want to talk about this audit report. They instead wanted to demonise others and suggest to farmers that people are not thinking about their best interests.

The member for Murrumba stated that industry participation in voluntary programs has been slow. This is of genuine concern for all those farmers who have real respect for the environment and value the environment. The report states—

The balance between productivity, profitability and environmental stewardship is tilted heavily towards the former two ...

That means that there is too much of a tilt towards productivity and profitability rather than the environment which the other side have suggested farmers value so much. We know that many farmers are doing interesting and innovative things under the best management practice program. They are to be commended for that. We celebrate them for that. That is what this report also does. We know that not enough of them are undertaking those interesting and innovative things.

Further, we know that the incentives are misaligned. We can perhaps get more profitability from some farms, but at the cost of the environment and our reef. We have to balance those things. Collectively we have to do that. It does not help if we try to attack the science, attack the process and create a false split between farmers and those who value the environment because we know that good farmers do both. We want to support them to get the best outcomes. This audit report highlights some of those problems.