




Speech By
Joseph Kelly

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Record of Proceedings, 26 October 2017

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (11.52 am): I move—

That the House take note of the Agriculture and Environment Committee's report No. 42, *Consideration of the Auditor-General's report No. 12: 2016-17—Biosecurity Queensland's management of agricultural pests and diseases*, tabled on 30 August 2017.

Before I speak to the report, I add my condolences to those offered by the chair of the PCCC and member for Southern Downs during the last sitting week. As the deputy chair of the Agriculture and Environment Committee, I send my condolences to a member of the parliamentary staff, Ciara Furlong, on the recent sad loss of her husband, Matthew. I attended the funeral and I am pleased to report to the House that Ciara is well supported by two large and loving families of deep faith. It was pleasing to see many members of the parliamentary staff in attendance as well. The faith of Ciara's family was evident from the readings chosen, particularly the reading from the *Book of Wisdom 4: 7-15*.

I also take this opportunity to note the passing of a great trade unionist, Mr Hughie Williams, who was a former secretary of the Transport Workers Union. Hughie was a great inspiration to many people in the union movement. Back in the late eighties and early nineties, I and many other young folk benefited from Hughie's guidance. Every Saturday morning at the Paddington Workers Club he would cook up a barbecue breakfast. Every large serve of bacon came with a large helping of union education. I note Hughie's passing and pass on my condolences to his wife and family.

The Agriculture and Environment Committee report presents a summary of the committee's examination of the Auditor-General's report tabled on 9 May this year. In essence, the Auditor-General's report examined whether the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, through Biosecurity Queensland, has been achieving its agricultural pest and disease management outcomes. To assess this, the Audit Office focused on how efficiently and effectively Biosecurity Queensland detects, responds to and manages significant agricultural pests and diseases. This is vitally important work to protect the people of Queensland from threats posed by invasive plants and animals and pathogens, and to ensure the continued safety of our primary industries and farm businesses.

The Auditor-General specifically audited the Panama program, wild dog management and state funded surveillance activities. The audit identified weaknesses in Biosecurity Queensland's work in relation to the setting of objectives and performance indicators, the collection of data and internal reporting, and the evaluation of activities to identify potential efficiencies. The audit report also noted the department's commitment to implementing new systems and frameworks to strengthen Queensland's biosecurity management system.

The audit made five recommendations to cover the deficiencies identified. In our report, the committee noted that the department had accepted all five recommendations and made substantial progress towards their implementation. Given that some of this work was still underway, the committee recommended that after six months the minister report to the House regarding the implementation of all recommendations from the audit report.

I thank the Auditor-General and his staff for their work on the audit. I thank the staff of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for their assistance and my fellow committee members for their examination of the report. I also pass on my thanks to the committee secretariat for their good work on this report. I commend the committee's report to the House.