




Speech By
Julianne Gilbert

MEMBER FOR MACKAY

Record of Proceedings, 26 October 2017

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to take note

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (11.59 am): I rise to contribute to the debate of the Agriculture and Environment Committee's report No. 42 of the 55th Parliament titled *Consideration of the Auditor-General's report 12: 2016-17—Biosecurity Queensland's management of agricultural pests and diseases*. I would like to thank my fellow committee members for their work and the committee secretariat, led by Rob Hansen, for their support. I thank the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for its contribution and assistance.

This report presents a summary of the Agriculture and Environment Committee's examination of the Auditor-General's report. Biosecurity diligence in Queensland is essential for the ongoing productivity of Queensland's agriculture industry and fisheries. We have seen infestations of wild dogs, rabbits and cane toads, white spot disease in our prawn industry, Panama disease in our bananas and outbreaks of fire ants and weeds. From time to time there are outbreaks of disease that occur in the cane industry in my region. For our agriculture and fisheries programs put in place to combat disease and pest outbreaks to be effective, there needs to be the robust setting of goals and reporting processes.

From our review of the Auditor-General's report we found that a lot of work was being carried out to combat pests and diseases. The report noted that the Panama program is still in containment stage, meaning that Biosecurity Queensland is still leading the response to the Panama disease outbreak and has not yet passed any key milestones for monitoring or elevation.

The Auditor-General made five recommendations. One of these is that we continue to develop a number of specific measurable, achievable, relevant and timed key performance indicators for each of Biosecurity Queensland's key activities or initiatives. We found that this was very important. There is no use throwing money at programs unless we know what we are going to achieve through the program. We need to be able to measure it at the end to see whether it worked. The Auditor-General also recommended that Biosecurity Queensland collect and analyse data so that they can monitor performance indicators.

The work of Biosecurity Queensland is ongoing. There is work to be done to make sure that Biosecurity Queensland does have achievable outcomes and that we know what those outcomes are going to be. That is why the committee recommended that the minister report to the House in six months regarding the implementation of all recommendations contained in the Auditor-General's report. I commend the report to the House.