



Speech By  
**Lachlan Millar**


**MEMBER FOR GREGORY**

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Record of Proceedings, 26 October 2017

**AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**Report, Motion to take note**

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (12.02 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to the debate of the Agriculture and Environment Committee's report No. 42 titled *Consideration of the Auditor-General's report 12: 2016-17—Biosecurity Queensland's management of agricultural pests and diseases*. As has been mentioned, the report looked at Panama disease tropical race 4 and wild dog surveillance carried out by Biosecurity Queensland's core programs. One of the main interests for me as the member for Gregory is the work done on wild dogs and the management activity.

**Mr Weir** interjected.

**Mr MILLAR:** I take the interjection from the member for Condamine. Panama disease tropical race 4 is just as important because it does provide a response to what is probably a very critical issue at the moment in Far North Queensland. Our banana industry in Far North Queensland plays a significant role in providing an economic contribution to the state and to export dollars not only down south but also overseas.

The Auditor-General found that Biosecurity Queensland cannot always demonstrate the benefits from the value of its investment into biosecurity measures and programs. While Biosecurity Queensland is delivering on activities, it cannot always demonstrate it has successfully achieved the ultimate aims and outcomes of the programs.

The staff at Biosecurity Queensland and the staff of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries do a fantastic job. Probably one of the hardest jobs is biosecurity, because those people are dealing with threats to our agriculture industry and dealing with threats to people's livelihoods. Biosecurity Queensland, from their leadership group right down to the people on the ground, are committed to making sure that they protect agriculture. They know that agriculture is fundamentally important to the people of Queensland and to our economy.

Hopefully the Labor Party will eventually recognise that agriculture is important to this state and appoint a full-time agriculture minister. For the first time—I have never seen this—we have gone without a full-time agriculture minister for two weeks. The Minister for Natural Resources and Mines and Minister for State Development now has to take on agriculture. Their priority should be with agriculture. Moving through the report, of interest—

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Mr MILLAR:** No-one is listening to the member over there, I can tell members that. Biosecurity Queensland developed the *Wild dog management strategy 2011-2016*. It is specifically responsible for developing policies and procedures, providing regulation, training and quality control of 1080 pesticide use, ensuring stakeholder engagement, coordinating and monitoring baiting programs, facilitating research and undertaking population damage assessment and collecting impact data.

What they also say is that when it comes to wild dogs it is also about shooting, trapping and baiting. They are very important practices for the control of wild dogs in Western Queensland. We need to continue to make investment into that and bring the rest of the agriculture industry along with what we are doing with regard to that practice. Trapping, baiting and shooting are just as important as cluster fencing. When it comes to the control of wild dogs, it is about making sure that we get all elements going in the right direction.

The audit noted that, in circumstances where so many different entities play a role, their responsibilities at times overlap. There is a risk that stakeholders are not clear about which entities are responsible for implementing the agreed strategies. Wild dog stakeholders who provided input into this audit expressed frustration. No one entity is driving the strategy's implementation and monitoring progress. I believe that is true at the moment.

While there is good effort being put into this, while there is a commitment by everybody to get these program up and going, we need to have a clear strategy from one point to make sure that we not only look at cluster fencing but also look at trapping, baiting and shooting to reduce the scourge of wild dogs in Western Queensland. Wild dogs have been an absolute terror for many graziers in Western Queensland for too long now. The populations are too big in some regards. This frustration has led to some graziers giving up. I call on everybody to get behind this to make sure we have a strategy on wild dog control that actually works for Queensland. Our wool industry and our beef industry are pivotal to making sure the Queensland economy continues to thrive.