




Speech By
Patrick Weir

MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE

Record of Proceedings, 26 October 2017

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to take note

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (11.55 am): As a member of the Agriculture and Environment Committee, I rise to speak to the Auditor-General's report No. 12 of 2016-17 into Biosecurity Queensland's management of agricultural pests and diseases. The audit covered three specific areas: Panama disease tropical race 4, wild dog management and the surveillance of Biosecurity Queensland's core programs.

Panama disease presents a very real threat to the banana industry in this state. The disease has never been eradicated in any country in the world where it has been discovered. Biosecurity Queensland has focused its response to the discovery of Panama disease in North Queensland on a containment strategy. Whilst that strategy seems to be working reasonably well, the audit found a lack of data that would give any reliable evidence of outcomes.

That was also the case with the wild dog management strategy. We are all aware of the damage that is inflicted upon the pastoral industry by the ravages of wild dogs. The role of Biosecurity Queensland is to develop policy, regulation, training and quality control of 1080 baiting, undertake population and damage assessment and collect impact data. The audit again found that it is unclear what benefits have been gained from the state's involvement in wild dog management due to a lack of supporting data. The report stated—

Many of the performance indicators require landholders to provide data about the status of dogs on their properties, and none of the responsible parties to the strategy have established systems and processes to capture the necessary data.

The audit went on to state—

However, in the main, the performance indicators are not specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timed (SMART).

It stated that there are too many to practically measure and monitor on an ongoing basis. The report continued—

This means that Biosecurity Queensland is not in a position to monitor and report on how effective these activities are.

The audit made five recommendations, basically surrounding data collection, storage and the reporting of outcomes, which are in the process of being implemented. Given the importance of biosecurity to our agricultural industry, the committee recommended that in six months time the minister report back to the House on how this is progressing. At the moment, I am addressing all comments to an empty chair where the minister should be sitting. Hopefully, that will be resolved in six months time.

Ms ENOCH: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Obviously the member is not here, so it is inappropriate. The acting minister is not here to defend himself.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Linard): Order! I was about to remind the member for Condamine that there is a long-established rule that we do not refer to the absence or otherwise of members in the House.

Opposition members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members, I have ruled. We all understand the rule well.