




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Oreco

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Investment) (9.47 am): Over the past weeks we have seen how the federal LNP government has no interest in helping Queensland. By contrast, the Palaszczuk Labor government is committed to partnering with the private sector to grow new industries and jobs, especially in regional Queensland.

When it comes to growth partnerships, there are few better examples than Wide Bay agricultural manufacturer Oreco. Through our government's Jobs and Regional Growth Fund, we facilitated an expansion of Oreco's manufacturing plant. I had the opportunity to visit that plant recently with the member for Bundaberg, Tom Smith. Any Queenslanders who have spent time on a Saturday at Bunnings will be familiar with what Oreco makes. On average, a bag of potting mix or other household garden product produced by Oreco is purchased somewhere in Australia every 14 seconds. That is 15 million bags produced each year.

Thanks to our government's partnership with Oreco, the company was ideally placed to take advantage of an opportunity produced by the pandemic and the numbers are astounding. With lockdowns seeing more Australians staying home, sales of some Oreco products rose 500 per cent and the company has grown fivefold in the past 12 months. Oreco is now building a new distribution hub that will make transport more efficient and assist the Wide Bay's many horticultural and agricultural producers.

The company is also looking to target global markets as it diversifies the ways it uses sugarcane trash to produce animal feed and bedding. This is great news for our canefarmers, too, as it provides a viable stream of additional income from offcuts previously burnt as rubbish.

Off the back of this growth, Oreco predicts it will create an additional 140 direct jobs over the next five years, plus many more along the agricultural supply chain. That is secure work for Wide Bay machinery operators and drivers, technicians, trade workers, labourers, and clerical and administrative staff, and opportunities for apprentices.

I congratulate Paul Woosley and the entire Oreco team for their foresight and determination, and I thank them for helping drive regional Queensland's economic recovery.