



Speech By
Charis Mullen

MEMBER FOR JORDAN

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Queensland Investor Forum

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (2.20 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, don't you love a member who talks about themselves in the third person? But let's be honest: the only person talking about the member for Kawana is the member for Kawana!

Recently I had the pleasure of joining the Queensland Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment and the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries for the agribusiness investor forum. The forum was the first event in the Queensland Investor Forum series which targets specific industry sectors. The forum series is the next phase of our broader investment engagement strategy, which kicked off with industry roundtables and will culminate in an investor summit next year. Working alongside the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment in the earlier roundtable events it has been greatly beneficial to hear directly from the private sector on the challenges they face and where they see future opportunities when it comes to investing in Queensland.

The virtual forum was open to a wider agribusiness audience and attracted participants from government, business and industry, academia and the business and investment advisory sector. The forum featured a strong line-up of presentations from government and industry leaders with agribusiness expertise and interactive panel sessions with audience Q and As. Participants were provided with an update on agriculture investment in Queensland, in-depth discussions on key and emerging investment opportunities, and why our state is a great place to do business.

Agribusiness is one of our leading sectors. We have world-leading technologies and processes and are renowned for our innovation and producing safe, clean, green, fresh and healthy products. Thanks to close consultation with industry and producers, the agribusiness sector has been a mainstay of the Queensland economy throughout the pandemic. The production forecasts are strong for both winter and summer crops, and improved weather conditions have seen cattle prices rise to historic levels. The sector has massive growth potential in both traditional markets including beef, horticulture, grains and food processing, and emerging industries including bioproduct manufacturing, energy generation, biosynthetic product development, aquaculture and value-adding sectors.

Our government's investment support and facilitation has seen many great partnerships formed during the past 18 months, including with Kerry Ingredients, a leading global taste and nutrition company which is setting up a purpose-built food technology and innovation centre of excellence here in Queensland. This centre will also act as the new headquarters for Kerry in Australia and New Zealand, adding to Queensland's food innovation capability. FarmFresh Fine Foods, a Bundaberg fresh food processor, will expand their sweet potato processing lines and their workforce by 45 per cent, with support provided under our \$175 million Jobs and Regional Growth Fund, ensuring FarmFresh can increase automation, reduce costs and run additional production shifts, making it more competitive in the marketplace.

Marquis Macadamias also received support under this fund to expand their Bundaberg processing facility and increase capacity by 25 per cent, creating 40 new jobs and helping local growers take a bigger bite of export opportunities. Hilton Foods Australia have a \$280 million state-of-the-art meat processing and distribution facility in Heathwood which opened with assistance from our government. In fact, I officially opened the facility on behalf of Minister Dick when he was State Development Minister. Hilton Foods supply packaged meat and vegan products to Woolworths and have created more than 650 food industry jobs in Queensland.

We are backing our producers through investment in two regional trade distribution centres in Cairns and in Toowoomba, where I was pleased to attend the official opening. These centres will supercharge rapid airfreight access for Queensland ag businesses, making it easier to get our world's-best produce on plates in key international markets. We already have a strong industry pedigree and abundant natural resources and capabilities. To take our agribusiness sector to the next level we need to leverage our past investments, keep innovating and further build our growing reputation as a world leader. We know that sustainability needs to be at the forefront of all our investment projects. With our economy rebounding strongly from the effects of the pandemic, we are firmly focused on the future and continuing to grow our economy.

Over the past four years the government's investment incentives programs helped unlock more than \$2.5 billion in capital expenditure and created 4,000 new jobs. This is a great foundation for the opportunities that are to come in this new era of growth. Our next investor forum, focussed on health technology, will be held later this month. Through our \$3.34 billion Queensland Jobs Fund we are ready to partner with business to encourage even more major private sector investment projects that deliver jobs and opportunities for all Queenslanders.