

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**  
**No. 528**  
**Asked on Wednesday, 20 April 2005**

**MR HORAN** asked the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries (MR PALASZCZUK)—

**QUESTION:**

- (1) How many growers have applied for the Queensland Government canker recovery loan package announced on 9 February?
- (2) How many growers have been successful in obtaining loans under this package?
- (3) How much has been paid out under this package?

**ANSWER:**

As the Honourable Member will be aware the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries is expanding the existing grower support scheme to allow for the refinancing of existing loans. No interest will be payable for two years on such loans. I am advised that the two growers most affected by the implementation of the pest quarantine arrangements in the Emerald region have been briefed on the expanded support arrangements and have indicated their interest in applying for support under the enhanced scheme. These growers are small domestic-market dependant growers who have encountered financial hardship as a result of the opposition of a number of other jurisdictions, and some segments of the national citrus industry, to permit them to access the domestic citrus market this season. This financial hardship is one of the reasons, I am advised, that they have been reluctant to apply for assistance under the current scheme. Similarly no growers outside of the Emerald Pest Quarantine Area have accessed the scheme but this is not surprising given the prompt action taken by the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries to quickly secure domestic market access for these growers under the auspices of the Citrus Canker Eradication National Management Group, thus contributing to the growers on-going commercial viability. The expansion of the scheme will enable the most affect growers in the Emerald Pest Quarantine Area to refinance existing loans, thereby preserving their viability until domestic market access can be restored. The most affected Emerald growers will have access to loans of \$500,000 each, whether in the form of refinanced loans or new loans. I am advised that it is expected that these growers will take advantage of this refinancing option as soon as it becomes available, following the finalisation of legal and regulatory requirements that must be implemented to enable the expanded scheme to take effect. The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries has and will continue to offer business advice to affected growers. It is anticipated that the two most affected growers in the Emerald District will each access up to \$500,000 worth of refinanced loans when the expanded Scheme is implemented. Other growers in both Emerald and Gayndah-Mundubbera will continue to have access to new loans of up to \$500,000.