MR HORAN asked the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries (MR MULHERIN)-

QUESTION:

With reference to the Helidon Clearing Dip yards which handle thousands of cattle per year travelling from the coastal tick area to the clean areas of the Darling Downs and Western Queensland and as owners of cattle are charged on a per head basis—

(1) Is he aware of the shameful state of these departmentally owned yards which are causing danger to people working in the yards and possible injury to cattle?

(2) Is he prepared to put in place a local management committee with an allocation of funds from the fees currently charged to renovate and maintain this important facility for the benefit of the cattle industry?

ANSWER:

(1) The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) regularly reviews all its sites to ensure they are fit for purpose and meet workplace, health and safety standards.

   As part of this review process ongoing maintenance is being performed at the Helidon Clearing Facilities.

   A workplace health and safety inspection performed on 1 December 2006 concluded that "*The structure is solid and safe for people and animals and only needs some minor repairs to bring it up to good condition.*" Six issues for immediate attention were identified and these have been rectified. Work is well progressed to correct another five issues identified as requiring medium term attention.

(2) DPI&F has not received a proposal for a 'local management committee' to oversee the facilities and at this point the necessity for such a committee is not evident.

   In 2003, DPI&F offered to a number of local authorities, including the Gatton Shire Council, the option of taking over the management of clearing facilities currently owned by DPI&F. At the time there were no acceptances. Several councils have now indicated that they would like to progress with this option and DPI&F is willing to consider any approach from councils to manage facilities.