

QUESTION ON NOTICE
No. 152
Asked on Tuesday, 20 February 2007

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

QUESTION:

With reference to the new State Government biosecurity unit and, in particular, the services that it will provide—

- (1) What services will the new biosecurity unit provide?
- (2) How many staff will be employed by the new biosecurity unit and in what capacity?
- (3) How many staff will be transferred from other departments to the new biosecurity unit (providing a breakdown of numbers from each department)?

ANSWER:

- (1) Established on 1 March 2007, Biosecurity Queensland is responsible for coordinating the Government's efforts to prevent, prepare, investigate, respond and recover from pest and diseases that threaten the economy and the environment.

Biosecurity Queensland brings together the biosecurity resources and functions of the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F), Department of Natural Resources and Water (NRW) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). As such, the services provided by these agencies for land protection, animal and plant biosecurity, environmental biosecurity, chemical use and animal welfare and keeping will continue with Biosecurity Queensland.

Nevertheless, the unification of the State's biosecurity capabilities in the one group represents a unique opportunity for Queensland to build on its existing biosecurity capacity and have an increased focus on biosecurity preparedness, market access and risk management. As such, over the next few months, work will begin on developing a biosecurity strategy, in consultation with stakeholders, which will shape the services that Biosecurity Queensland delivers in the future.

- (2) Staff numbers in Biosecurity Queensland are not yet finalized.

The roles performed by transferring officers will not change with the establishment of Biosecurity Queensland. Some changes may occur as the strategic direction of the group emerges.

- (3) As per (2) above, staff numbers in Biosecurity Queensland are not yet finalized. As at 6 March 2007 negotiations are continuing for more than 180 full time equivalent staff from the Department of Natural Resources and Water. There is also on-going discussion regarding staff resources from the Environmental Protection Agency.