

QUESTION ON NOTICE
No. 1739
Asked on Thursday, 13 November 2008

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

QUESTION:

How is the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries facilitating further growth in the lifestyle horticulture industry?

ANSWER:

The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) is supporting growth in the Queensland lifestyle horticulture industry through targeted research and development projects, skills development initiatives, support for industry associations, industry capacity building and strategic planning projects, securing market access and initiating trade development activities.

DPI&F's research and development effort is aimed at achieving increased industry output and productivity, the development of new plant varieties (particularly turf grass) that meet changing market requirements and improving the profitability and environmental sustainability of our lifestyle horticulture producers and other businesses in the context of climate change.

A particular focus is assisting the industry to use its resources more sustainably by increasing water use efficiency through the development of best practice water use guidelines, trials and assessment of new irrigation technology and research into irrigation scheduling techniques.

DPI&F also commissioned the Queensland Sustainable Lifestyle Horticulture Project as an outcome from a dialogue forum that I convened with the industry in March 2007. The project involved the preparation of a comprehensive report on the current challenges being experienced by industry, as well as a strategic future direction plan to respond to these challenges.

The final report for this project was presented to industry in May 2008. Key recommendations include the need for the industry to better communicate the range of benefits of urban landscapes to stimulate new demands; and also to find ways for lifestyle horticulture greenlife products to be acknowledged as climate change and sustainability solutions.

DPI&F has also assisted the lifestyle horticulture industry to establish the Australian Centre for Lifestyle Horticulture (ACLH). This umbrella organisation is helping to improve industry cohesion and communication, and is also undertaking a number of important industry planning, promotion and development projects. I expect that ACLH will take a leading role in implementing the future directions plan developed as part of the Queensland Sustainable Lifestyle Horticulture Project.

I launched the ACLH Lifestyle Horticulture Export Strategy in April 2008. This launch highlighted a number of recent successful trade missions to Singapore, Japan and China that DPI&F staff organised in conjunction with the industry. These missions have already helped to generate new export market opportunities for Queensland businesses.

DPI&F supports a number of industry development positions within lifestyle horticulture industry organisations. These positions are focused on strengthening environmental stewardship and business practices across the industry.

Biosecurity Queensland also has important roles in supporting overseas and interstate market access for lifestyle horticulture businesses and also in responding to plant pest and disease incursions. For example, Biosecurity Queensland's red imported fire ant eradication program has underpinned the industry's ongoing access to key markets and their recent response to the identification of Mexican Feather Grass highlights the alertness of Biosecurity Queensland.