QUESTION ON NOTICE
No. 477
Asked on 15 April 2008

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

QUESTION:

With reference to the Coalition policy at the last election to transfer the agricultural colleges based at Dalby, Longreach, Emerald, Burdekin and Mareeba from the Department of Employment and Training to the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, and to provide a local board for each of these colleges—

(1) Has he decided to copy this Coalition policy and when will the transfer happen?

(2) Which research stations are earmarked for sale?

(3) Will he guarantee that he will not sell any or part of the agricultural colleges, given the ballooning $55b of Government debt?

ANSWER:

The development of a futuristic approach to research was first highlighted in my speech to primary industry representatives and investors at a Centre for Economic Development Australia (CEDA) function in September 2007.

Rather than attempting to bolster finances, this plan is a tangible expression of the Queensland Government's drive to make Queensland the knowledge capital of Australia.

We will build on those areas of agricultural science – whether it's food, fibre or the bio-medical industry – where Queensland will be a world-leader.

The aim is to create a world-class agricultural science network across Queensland with a system of facilities that work hand-in-hand with educational institutions and attract world-class scientists.

The first of the world-class facilities will be a Tropical Science and Biosecurity complex in North Queensland, where the Queensland Government is focussing on creating the nation's new industrial powerhouse.

We will co-invest with universities, CSIRO and other research partners in high priority science infrastructure. We will target investment through 'centres of excellence' in areas where Queensland can be a national or international leader and provide the opportunity to attract more private investment in research and more commercialisation opportunities.

The re-evaluation of resources is consistent with the goals of the *Blueprint for the Bush*, and identifies opportunities for co-location of DPI&F research facilities with education and training institutions.

This is part of a three-to-five year plan that involves changes, which will only be made in consultation with staff and other stakeholders, involving existing facilities and service delivery.

Agriculture industries have moved on from many of the old programs that suited another era, and this Government is moving forward with them.