

QUESTION ON NOTICE
No. 102
Asked on 17 February 2011

MR HOOLIHAN asked the Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland (MR MULHERIN)–

QUESTION:

How does the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation support Queensland's \$1.4b Lifestyle Horticulture Industry?

ANSWER: [Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economies (MR MULHERIN)]

The Lifestyle Horticulture Industry is a diverse primary industries sector situated in regional and urban areas across Queensland, providing employment opportunities from production through to retail. It includes the turf, cut flower and nursery production sectors as well as retail nursery, landscape, arboriculture, sports field and public gardens maintenance.

During 2009-10 the production component of the industry was valued at more than \$974 million and serviced both domestic and export markets.

The Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) recognises the substantial contribution of lifestyle horticulture businesses to the Queensland economy and way of life. DEEDI has provided access to the latest research, specialised technical staff and extension support and facilitated the formation of the Centre for Lifestyle Horticulture, so the industry is equipped to respond to emerging challenges.

DEEDI has provided more than \$2.5 million in research and industry development projects in recent years as well as considerable specialist in-kind assistance to boost individual business sustainability and growth. In collaboration with industry, DEEDI has undertaken work to ensure lifestyle businesses are better equipped to manage issues including water sustainability, market development, biosecurity and employee skilling and training.

The redevelopment of the Redlands Research Station facility in 2005 has enabled research to be conducted by DEEDI in state of the art facilities specific to lifestyle horticulture. The centre also provides a central location for industry and government services, through co-location with many of the lifestyle horticulture peak industry associations.

Biosecurity Queensland supports the interstate trade of the nursery sector through their proactive approach in regulating the Interstate Certification Assurance (ICA) arrangements for the management of fire ants in nursery products. The inspection and treatment of nursery products under this program enables products to be transported and sold interstate. Biosecurity officers are also working collaboratively with industry on key plant health issues to limit the impact of pest and diseases on the industry.

DEEDI continues to undertake capacity building initiatives in collaboration with industry and is developing a Horticulture 2020 strategy which will explore challenges facing the industry as well as capitalise on opportunities for further growth and development.

With the industry's direct stock losses in excess of \$4.5million due to recent flooding and cyclone events in Queensland, DEEDI has been working directly with the Lifestyle Horticulture Industry to identify key areas of greatest need. DEEDI has also ensured that lifestyle horticulture is actively engaged in the Queensland flood and cyclone recovery process, with a view to supporting a timely recovery.