Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries

Answers to Government Questions on Notice
QUESTION: (Submitted by Jo-Ann Miller MP, Member for Bundamba)

Minister, I refer to MPS 1-12. How is DPI&F contributing to the development of a high quality hardwood plantation industry in Queensland?

ANSWER:

The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) successfully released the first series of eucalypt hardwood planting material to the Queensland forestry industry in late 2006. Material is currently being mass-propagated through the efforts of numerous commercial nurseries in anticipation of planting later this year. This represents a critical achievement in the DPI&F’s hardwood breeding program and will provide Queensland’s emergent hardwood plantation sector with improved growth, and greater disease resistant planting material. This important commercial outcome is a direct result of DPI&F’s Smart Science investments.

Improved hardwood cultivars are of critical importance to the emerging Queensland hardwoods plantation industry, currently constrained by a lack of improved planting material. Improved hardwood clonal material suitable for deployment in Queensland did not previously exist. DPI&F’s R&D efforts are of critical and fundamental importance to the establishment and sustainable economic growth of this Queensland hardwood plantation industry.

Earlier this year, DPI&F scientists confirmed that the new Corymbia hybrid can be deployed over a wide range of soil types and rainfall conditions, highlighting its commercial application. DPI&F scientists have also been working closely with commercial nurseries to address any propagation-related issues, so as to ensure fast-to-market outcomes.

These achievements are an integral element of DPI&F’s support for the State Forests Process. The Queensland Government’s Regional Forestry Agreements (RFA) are based on the assumption that hardwood plantations will be producing substantial volumes of solid (sawn) timber resources by about 2025. This can only be achieved through the timely development and commercial release of new elite hardwood clonal material, identifying effective control strategies for endemic pest and diseases, and development of early return wood products.

A further breakthrough has recently occurred with the release of high performing African Mahogany clones for propagation research and eventual plantation deployment.
QUESTION: (Submitted by Peter Lawlor MP, Member for Southport)

In reference to MPS 1-1, 1-2 and 1-14 can the Minister please outline commitments made by the department to deliver on water use efficiency projects and initiatives in primary industries?

ANSWER:

The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) contributes to improved agricultural productivity in drier climates through a range of water use efficiency research and development activities.

As temperatures increase, the effective use of available water will be integral to profitable and sustainable farming systems in the future. DPI&F conducts a range of research, development and extension projects to develop plants, crops and whole-farm production systems that are designed to improve the efficiency of water use.

DPI&F is using crop improvement (breeding) programs to incorporate water use efficient traits into new varieties as well as researching natural plant mechanisms that display enhanced tolerance to heat, drought and other environmental stresses to better provide farmers with resilient crops in drier climates.

In sorghum for instance, DPI&F scientists in conjunction with international collaborators have discovered key stay-green genes for drought adaptation and are gaining an excellent understanding on how some plants are capable of adapting to heat and drought stress. As a consequence of this discovery, the DPI&F sorghum breeding team is now able to commence incorporating these genes into sorghum germplasm to provide this drought tolerant characteristic in future parental material.

This work may also lead to the incorporation of similar drought and heat tolerance traits into other important crops such wheat, barley and maize in the future.

DPI&F is also working with irrigators at a paddock and farm level to improve the water use efficiency of irrigated cotton and grain production. The focus of this project is on enhancements to irrigation scheduling, reduction of losses from dams and channels and through deep drainage. Other work is evaluating the effectiveness of overhead and trickle irrigation systems as alternatives to the traditional furrow systems. These types of improvements to water use efficiency are designed to deliver a 50 percent increase in cotton yield per hectare by 2015 from the same amount of water.

DPI&F is well placed to assist Queensland primary industries to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate variability and climate change through continuous improvement to whole-farm production systems.

Other DPI&F scientists are combining the outputs of a range of research and development projects including advanced whole-farm modelling to develop predictive models, integrated farming systems and decision support tools that will allow farmers to better manage their whole production system in a drier climate.
QUESTION: (Submitted by Ken Hayward MP, Member for Kallangur)

I refer to MPS 1-20. How is the new Biosecurity Queensland progressing and what benefits will flow from its formation?

ANSWER:

Biosecurity Queensland commenced operations as a new business unit within the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries on 1 March 2007 and its implementation is progressing positively.

This new agency will be responsible for coordinating the Government's efforts to prevent, prepare, investigate, respond and recover from pests and diseases that threaten Queensland's economy and environment.

Resources from the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, the Department of Natural Resources and Water and the Environmental Protection Agency have been brought together to form this business unit, which brings together the expertise and resources to deal with the wide range of biosecurity threats to our economy, environment and way of life.

The establishment of Biosecurity Queensland is a major change management exercise and a 12 month program has begun to form a fully integrated organisation.

Progress that has already been made includes:

- An extensive staff consultation process involving workshops across the State seeking staff views. This has already resulted in organisational changes with the formation of a Biosecurity Science Unit and the integration of Invasive Plants and Animals operational staff into regional management arrangements from 1 June 2007.

- Integration of staff accommodation arrangements as well as other organisational arrangements such as computer networks.

- Commencement of the development of a Queensland Biosecurity Strategy which will inform future priorities and biosecurity policies.

- Commencement of a review of Biosecurity legislation and development of biosecurity science and tropical biosecurity sub-strategies.

The benefit this agency will bring is in having a single agency responsible for and coordinating biosecurity issues to protect Queensland. This will result in improved efficiencies in addressing any overlaps and gaps which have previously existed with multiple Government departments handling biosecurity issues.
QUESTION: (Submitted by Evan Moorhead MP, Member for Waterford)

Minister, in a competitive employment marketplace what is the department doing to ensure that people with the appropriate skills are available to the primary industries sector? Please refer to MPS 1-13.

ANSWER:

The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) is driving a number of programs and services to address skills shortages to ensure that appropriately skilled workers are available to the primary industry and agribusiness sector.

Central to the plan is a new approach to working with industry and employers. With such an incredibly tight labour market, Queensland’s agribusiness sector faces significant and increasing competition from other sectors for labour and skills. It is imperative that our industry is able to accurately identify and communicate its current and future skills and training needs to the education and training sector and its labour needs to other stakeholders who can help work co-operatively and improve the attraction, recruitment and retention and skilling of the labour force.

The department has developed the Skills Telegraph as a cornerstone of the Rural Skills, Training and Labour Strategy to identify what training is needed and where.

The Skills Telegraph is a web-based database that will allow producers throughout Queensland to log-on or call the department and have their skills shortages and training needs recorded.

This will allow us to more accurately pinpoint critical training shortages based on industry, region and skill level.

This comprehensive rural industry training plan for Queensland will provide the Department of Education, Training and the Arts (DETA) with the intelligence to design targeted training resource agreements with public and private training providers accessing public funding for skilling and training.

Primary industries in Queensland benefit from a diverse range of career opportunities – from working at the farm-gate and developing end processed products for market, to utilising the latest technologies in research and development to improve taste and functionality.

The Skills Telegraph is just one of the initiatives which will promote and support the great variety of agricultural careers in Queensland.

The department’s Rural Skills, Training and Labour Strategy is also focussed on Promoting and Building Careers in Agriculture. Further initiatives taking place include active industry engagement in schools and the development of a Gateway School in Agriculture providing a Gateway to Career Pathways in the primary industry sector.
Recent events such as the ‘Investing in our Future’ field day or the ‘Revolutionary Science’ Forum provide an opportunity to attract investors and highlight our research facilities and achievements and promote careers in primary industries, particularly in the science area.

A comprehensive schools program was conducted in May 2007 at the Investing in our Future field day at Hermitage Research Station at Warwick, which targeted active learning across a range of science activities for the primary and secondary schools students in attendance. These activities promoted career opportunities for our future scientists.

In association with AgForce an interactive display on Rural Labour and Skilling was also conducted on the day, and a careers forum was held with our Chief Scientist Professor Joe Baker. Many supporting agribusiness industries had displays as well as supporting organisations like the Bureau of Meteorology.

The Revolutionary Science Forum at the Queensland Academy of Science, Mathematics and Technology at Toowong in April 2007, showcased food science innovations and students were treated to presentations from some of Queensland’s top scientists about the latest developments in gene technology, crop modelling, nanotechnology and microbiology, and their real world applications in agriculture and food science.

Linked to events like this, Agforce, DPI&F and DETA are co-funders of the School to Industry project. Fifteen Rural Career Networks across the state are growing to provide links to school, industry, community and Government to tackle the skilling and training agenda.

DPI&F is also proud to be supporting labour initiatives by building regional and industry capacity in developing skills formation strategies designed to maximise utilisation of community workforces. Projects in the fruit and vegetable industry of Bundaberg and agriculture in the Inland Burnett regions are excellent examples of this.

The Queensland Government is also working in partnership with the Australian Government in supporting the delivery of FarmBis subsidies for management level training and skill development which we now know will continue past the present program providing upskilling for many farm managers.

The FarmBis Targeted Industry Initiative also encourages and supports primary producers to accept greater responsibility for their education and training needs. The initiative aims to identify and implement strategic approaches to effective learning and supports involvement in projects that are likely to directly benefit Queensland primary producers.

Our intention is to enable industry to attract, retain, develop and access a skilled workforce both now and into the future to ensure profitable and sustainable primary industries.
QUESTION: (Submitted by Ken Hayward MP, Member for Kallangur)

With reference to MPS 1-13, can the Minister please explain the department's commitment to improving business capabilities of Queensland primary producers and how this will enhance productivity and sustainability outcomes for the Primary Industries sector?

ANSWER:

The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) has a strong commitment to improving the business capabilities of Queensland's agribusiness operators, enabling them to develop profitable and sustainable enterprises. In 2006-07 there was 479 business capability group learning activities with over 8000 participants.

Through the $5.2 million FutureCane project, DPI&F assisted sugar growers, millers, industry organisations and service providers to maximise the productivity and profitability of the Queensland sugar industry by working with farmers to design their particular farming system to maximise soil health through minimum tillage, controlled traffic techniques and by incorporating nitrogen-fixing legumes in the crop rotation with cane. As a result, sugar producers are changing to more profitable production and business practices.

The tools developed by FutureCane will be used in focused economic recovery projects associated with sugarcane smut. Of this $2.975 million will be used to extend the on-farm skills and knowledge developed during the FutureCane project. A key strategy will be to provide training to producers in the use of the Farm Economic Analysis Tool, which will assist them to calculate their options for planning, management and surveillance across a variety of planting scenarios.

DPI&F is also providing direct assistance to enable businesses to identify and facilitate export and trade opportunities and develop new markets. These activities encompass the dissemination of market intelligence, the enhancement of exporter capability and the facilitation of supply chains and market entry, all aspects of business capability. Some key projects planned for 2007-08 include GulFood, the continuation of the Food and Agribusiness Export Strategy and the Asian Markets for Horticulture Initiative, all of which are building knowledge and skills in the agribusiness sector.

At the local level, initiatives such as events showcasing high value niche products to the retail sector and food and beverage export workshops for producers also build agribusiness capability. A recent workshop for growers of gourmet products at Nambour attracted 40 beef, poultry, native foods, cheese, seafood and horticulture producers. This was the first workshop delivered as part of DPI&F’s Gourmet Food Project and follows the recent launch of the Enterprising Food Directory and Enterprising Farms.

The Economic Web Portal project is another Smart State innovation placing all of DPI&F's economic and financial support tools in one place for efficient access and use.
around the clock. Improved access, and therefore, greater use of economic and financial software leads to informed business decision making. Better agribusiness decisions play a vital role in the success of primary industries in Queensland as it drives industry development and improves profitability.

DPI&F will continue to develop and disseminate economic decision support tools to the relevant sector, supported by the provision of group training activities in their use. Examples of these tools are e-Piggery and the companion tool PrimePulse that have been developed for the pork industry, and Breed Cow and Dynama for the beef industry. These are the kinds of tools that will be available through the Economic Web Portal.

This Portal will also provide a platform for access to a library of DPI&F economic publications and reports, a timetable of business skills training events and a contact database for regional agricultural economic and extension services.

The FarmBis program, jointly funded by the State and Australian Governments, has subsidised almost 4 500 training occasions from 1 July 2006 to 31 March 2007. This funding enables producers to improve production, business and natural resource management skills.

Business capability development activities also include DPI&F’s Building Rural Entrepreneurs (BRE) program, which is delivered in response to requests from rural industry or community sectors and tailored to meet specific needs of participants. Programs already organised for 2007-08 include courses for melon growers and for Indigenous communities wishing to increase their agribusiness skills.

A wide range of industry specific group learning activities are organised regionally in response to client identified needs and to build on participants’ existing skills and knowledge. For example, group learning to increase business capability will be delivered to the beef industry. This includes activities to foster supply chain development, to foster the use of individual animal identification systems as production and business management tools and to promote informed grazing land management best practice.

Facilitating supply chain development is another strategy by which DPI&F is building business capability. The focus of supply chain activities in 2007-08 is to facilitate the development of new chains, business alliances, networks and new business structures and to foster the consolidation of existing chains. The following industries will be specifically targeted for supply chain development work in 2007-08: beef, sheep meat, goat meat, wild game, feed grains, wine and a range of niche products.
QUESTION: (Submitted by Jo-Ann Miller MP, Member for Bundamba)

I refer to MPS 1-4 and 1-13. What are agribusiness precincts and what value will they offer Queensland producers?

ANSWER:

Agribusiness precincts are a relatively small number of key strategic areas of land in Queensland that will be identified as having the ability to provide a significant boost to the value that the agribusiness sector contributes to the state economy.

By taking a precinct planning approach the potential for agribusiness development can be assessed and planned in conjunction with economic and industry development strategies to address market opportunities. As well, supply chain development, local and regional land use planning, infrastructure planning and sequencing, catchment planning and resource management will be included to improve investment security.

The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries will facilitate agribusiness precincts by taking a regional economic development approach with stakeholders and other government agencies and focussing on:

- adding value to current and future infrastructure investments such as water availability, transport, energy, processing and expansion opportunities in existing agribusiness supply chains;
- clustering of high value enterprises to improve critical mass and collaboration on the best use of land and other resources to meet market opportunities, investment attraction, improving supply chain efficiency, market and export development, developing best practice animal and plant health, implementing labour supply and skilling strategies;
- using communication, education and land use planning mechanisms to reduce potential land use conflicts, streamlining land use application and approval processes and improving understanding of investment opportunities.

A regional economic development approach will result in coordination of all levels of government, enabling investors to realise opportunities for value adding to resources, as well as enabling access, infrastructure, resource and production improvements and so reducing impediments to investment.

Queensland producers can benefit from this precinct planning approach by taking advantage of the improvements to infrastructure and other resources in and around the precinct areas. Reduced impediments will enable them to focus on market opportunities and potential for growth.

With the drought still affecting southern and western Queensland, producers are already starting to move to areas where there are more readily available sources of water, with soils and climate suitable for their enterprises. The formation of
agribusiness precincts will make it easier for producers/investors to select the best agricultural areas in Queensland for carrying on their business.

Examples of potential agribusiness precincts include the Fitzroy Agricultural Corridor (feedlots), Bowen District (horticulture), Dawson Valley, Paradise Dam – Burnett area and Traveston Dam areas.
QUESTION: (Submitted by Peter Lawlor MP, Member for Southport)

Minister in regards to the MPS 1-11, how has your portfolio been able to assist producers suffering the long term drought as well as those who are now recovering from drought?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government has made a significant contribution to assist producers cope with the current drought. The Government also assists with recovery from the drought events and will help producers to be prepared for the inevitable next drought.

Since the commencement of the drought in early 2000 through to 2007-08, the Government expects to outlay more than $221 million in a combination of drought assistance, recovery and preparedness measures. Approximately $130 million of these outlays will be on assistance measures with the remainder in ongoing drought preparedness initiatives.

The Government also works closely with other jurisdictions on national drought policy, and closely with the Australian Government on the Exceptional Circumstances (EC) program, to which the Queensland Government makes a 10 percent contribution to interest subsidies and manages the interest subsidy program. By the end of April 2007, QRAA had provided $228 million in EC interest subsidies during this drought, while Centrelink had provided over $163 million in income support to Queensland producers.

Key portfolio assistance measures that have been providing assistance since the beginning of this drought include:

- the Drought Relief Assistance Scheme (DRAS), which has provided in excess of $41 million and processed over 22 400 freight subsidy applications since 2000-01;
- QRAA’s Small Business Emergency Assistance Scheme has provided over $10.8 million in subsidies since 2000-01;
- a dedicated ‘Drought Hotline’ as a key contact point for those seeking drought assistance;
- the farm financial counselling service;
- an electronic trading site called Feedlink for producers and fodder suppliers seeking to buy or sell stock feed; and
- numerous workshops for primary producers to provide them with information on issues including animal nutrition, government assistance, climate forecasts and financial management.

In addition, the State Government provides assistance through:

- the electricity drought subsidy scheme managed by the Department of Mines and Energy (DME) with outlays around $1 million per year; and
• school transport subsidies and other concessions managed by Queensland Transport.

The drought carry-on finance and drought recovery loan schemes have provided $13.8 million to producers since 2003 (outlays in this program are not included in the $221 million figure already mentioned as the money will eventually be repaid).

In December 2006 the Queensland Government announced $32.5 million in new initiatives for drought related support including:

• the Drought Rate Rebate Scheme estimated at $16 million over two years;
• the rebate scheme for part A water charges estimated at $7.5 million over two years;
• an expanded contribution to the EC program, including to local small business estimated at $4 million for primary producers and $2.2 million for small business in additional outlays over two years; and
• amendments to the Drought Relief Assistance Scheme and the Drought Carry-On Finance Scheme to allow producers to make necessary changes to their drought management strategies without compromising access to State Government assistance, estimated at $2.8 million in additional outlays over two years.

It is hoped that the coming rainfall season will provide sufficient rain to commence recovery, a process that will take some years. The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) is working closely with industry to ensure that government will provide appropriate assistance to producers recovering from drought.

The DPI&F Director-General and I will be hosting a forum with industry organisations on 1 August 2007 that will discuss drought recovery and the appropriate support for producers.

The Queensland Government is the only government in Australia to offer a drought recovery loan scheme; and producers are also able to access significant freight subsidies to replace livestock; farm financial counselling services; and other departmental extension services that will all play a significant role in assisting producers with drought recovery.

With regard to preparing for the next drought, the Queensland Government already has many years of experience in providing programs to help producers prepare for drought, such as a significant investment in research and development to benefit producers wanting to be better prepared for climate variability. Capacity in this area will be enhanced through the establishment of the Queensland Climate Change Centre of Excellence in the Department of Natural Resources and Water.

Nationally, Queensland is actively involved through the Primary Industries Standing Committee and the Primary Industries Ministerial Council with regard to drought programs, including harmonising drought declarations across jurisdictions; the possible introduction of drought preparedness grants for individuals and communities; and the development of the National Agricultural Monitoring System (NAMS). Queensland chairs the NAMS Steering Committee through Mr Jim Varghese, DPI&F Director-General.
QUESTION: (Submitted by Evan Moorhead MP, Member for Waterford)

I refer to MPS 1-21. In regards to the recent Asian honey bee incursion in Cairns how would you assess the response of Biosecurity Queensland?

ANSWER:

I am pleased to be able to report that the incursion of Apis cerana or Asian honey bee has been very capably handled by Biosecurity Queensland.

A response centre was established at the DPI&F Redden Street office in Cairns and manned by staff from around the State on a rotational basis. The Queensland Beekeeper's Association and local beekeepers were very supportive and provided considerable technical expertise to the response.

The first hive was found on 4 May 2007 in the mast of a yacht in dry dock in Cairns. Since then four more hives were detected through intensive surveillance and all hives were destroyed.

Delimiting surveillance has indicated no other focal points of exotic bee activity.

A number of different methods were used for surveillance including sweepnetting of flowering plants, pheromone traps, physical examination of businesses close to the port area and an awareness program to encourage public reporting of unusual bees which were then followed up. When Asian honey bees were detected by sweepnetting, feeding stations were established and the bees followed back to locate the hive.

Since the last hive was destroyed there have been no further detections of Asian honey bees.

The response has been wound down, but with regular boat and barge traffic to and from Torres Strait islands and Papua New Guinea, we have to remain vigilant.

An enhanced surveillance program will continue for the next year and then be reassessed.

In this particular incident we have been fortunate that the Asian honey bees were the Java strain which do not carry the devastating Varroa destructor mite. Australia is one of the few countries that remain free of this mite and we hope to remain that way for as long as possible.
QUESTION: (Submitted by Jo-Ann Miller MP, Member for Bundamba)

I refer to MPS 1-14: What is DPI&F doing to promote trade and exports in the Asia Pacific region?

ANSWER:

Trade and export development is a key priority for the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) and the work that is being undertaken within this program initiative spans several international markets. Some examples of what DPI&F is doing to promote trade in these markets are provided below.

Republic of Korea – DPI&F is implementing the Grow Korea Project in this market and 26 companies have become involved in this initiative. A DPI&F Trade and Investment Officer has spent 18 months working in the Queensland Government Trade and Investment Office in Seoul and has successfully facilitated $2.8 million for Queensland food and agribusiness trade during this time.

China – The Asian Markets for Horticulture Initiative which is managed by DPI&F has successfully facilitated the first export shipment of mandarins direct to China following the new protocol becoming operative. The China market holds enormous potential for our citrus industry and another shipment in the forthcoming season is expected to occur. Work is also being undertaken to facilitate the export of mangoes to China. DPI&F scientists are researching hot water dipping as an alternative disinfestation process to the vapour heat treatment for mangoes. If this technique is accepted, it will assist Queensland mangoes to access several new markets.

Livestock services and supplies are a key export priority for the department and within the Asia Pacific region the focus has been on Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and, more recently, on Mexico in relation to opportunities in genetics, traceability systems, and stockfeed.

Fiji and New Caledonia are very interested in importing tropical breeds of cattle from Queensland. In relation to Fiji, there is currently no protocol in place for this trade to occur. In June 2007, in response to a request from the Fijian Government, DPI&F funded an official visit to Fiji by a Biosecurity Queensland veterinarian to assist in developing an acceptable health protocol for the importation of feedlot cattle from tropical Queensland to Fiji. During this visit a draft protocol was developed and has received in-principle support from the Fijian Government. Biosecurity Queensland will continue to provide advice to Biosecurity Australia with the intention of establishing a trade in feedlot cattle.

Following two visits in 2006 by New Caledonian delegations interested in Queensland livestock supplies and services, a DPI&F Trade and Investment Officer visited New Caledonia in June 2007. An extensive itinerary was organised by the Agriculture Department in New Caledonia as well as the Australian Consulate General and 30 agricultural enterprises were visited. This visit has allowed DPI&F to
obtain a good understanding of the opportunities and requirements for the development of the agriculture industry in New Caledonia which will now be followed up on.

The very successful 'Handshakes' business matching program that was managed by DPI&F in collaboration with Austrade at Beef 2006, facilitated business meetings with Queensland companies for over 200 international delegates from 17 countries, several of which were from the Asia Pacific region. This trade facilitation has resulted in $3 million in export orders for Queensland companies to date.

DPI&F coordinated a mission to Papua New Guinea in June 2006. Companies interested in exporting a range of products and services including grains, stockfeed, pasture seeds, fertilisers and training participated. Good relationships were established and follow up activity is being undertaken. Biosecurity Queensland recently hosted a delegation from Papua New Guinea interested in looking at how Queensland manages its plant and animal biosecurity. This visit has assisted in forging key relationships with the Papua New Guinea Government which is very beneficial in trade development.

DPI&F is also building important government and industry relationships in Chile. While it is a strong competitor in horticulture, these relationships provide an avenue for Queensland industry to understand how the Chileans manage their supply chain efficiencies and also to partner with their industry to access third markets.

DPI&F hosted 40 official and business delegations from the Asia Pacific region in 2006–07.

At an official level, senior DPI&F officers meet with visiting heads of missions and trade consulates from key markets on a regular basis. DPI&F also coordinates a range of activities including business matching and product showcasing with visiting delegations to introduce Queensland food and agribusiness companies and to promote their products and services.

Government to Government relationships are a vital part of trade facilitation and DPI&F puts considerable effort into forging these relationships. For example, in 2005, DPI&F established a joint working group with the Ministry of Agriculture and cooperatives in Thailand to explore opportunities for agricultural collaboration. A number of initiatives have commenced as a result of this working group including joint projects in the areas of horticulture post harvest handling systems and chemical residue testing.

These examples give a good flavour of the considerable efforts DPI&F is undertaking to promote trade and exports in the Asia Pacific region, which Queensland companies will continue to build on and grow.
QUESTION: (Submitted by Ken Hayward MP, Member for Kallangur)

In respect of MPS 1-15, how has the department supported the Australian Centre for Lifestyle Horticulture?

ANSWER:

The lifestyle horticulture industry makes a very important contribution to Queensland's economy and culture. The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) continues to collaborate with the Australian Centre for Lifestyle Horticulture and the lifestyle horticulture industry generally on projects that address industry issues and build sustainable industry growth.

DPI&F has undertaken to assist the industry to develop a future vision and strategic plan. An independent consultant has recently been engaged to work with industry representatives, including the Australian Centre for Lifestyle Horticulture, to undertake this industry planning project.

Other research projects to assist the industry to adjust to the water challenge include investigating the role of alternative water sources such as greywater and recycled water; and also developing outdoor water use best practice guidelines and WaterWise methods for both industry and the community.

The outcomes from these projects will form the basis of education programs being delivered through the Australian Centre for Lifestyle Horticulture which aim to re-educate both industry and home gardeners in water use efficiency best practice. The State government is providing the Centre with $600,000 in grants to assist with the development and delivery of these programs - part of a long term strategy to assist with industry recovery.

DPI&F support for the Australian Centre for Lifestyle Horticulture also includes a total of $152,000 of cash and in-kind which the Centre was able to use as leverage to obtain a further $180,000 from the Australian Government for their Strategic Lifestyle Horticulture Industry Development project.

DPI&F has also been integral to the development of the Centre’s Export Development Strategy as part of this project. This has led to an MoU with the Singapore Government and a grant from the Australia-China Agricultural Cooperation Agreement for a mission to China.

In addition, the Centre was successful in securing $380,000 from DPI&F's FarmBis Targeted Industry Initiative to undertake a tailored comprehensive management training program for the production sectors (nursery, turf grass and cut flower) of the lifestyle horticulture industry.

DPI&F will continue to collaborate with the Australian Centre for Lifestyle Horticulture and the lifestyle horticulture industry to build sustainable industry growth.
**QUESTION:** (Submitted by Mike Horan MP, Member for Toowoomba South)

I refer to the DPI & F staffing mentioned on page 1-8 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements and the Minister’s media statement of 20 July 2006 which stated “DPI is aiming to recruit around 100 new staff members aimed at boosting the Department’s ability to deliver improved services utilising the latest technology and information.”

Could you please advise:

(a) A breakdown of the jobs/positions being targeted for voluntary early retirements and a breakdown of the locations of staff that (i) will be offered voluntary early retirements; (ii) have been offered voluntary early retirements; and (iii) have accepted voluntary early retirements?

(b) How many voluntary early retirements have been offered and how many VERs have been accepted by Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries staff for each financial year (reported separately) since 1998.

(c) How many of the 100 mentioned in the media statement have been employed and please provide a breakdown of the 100 new staff members including their job title/s, classification/s, the units they are employed in, and the office they are employed in?

**ANSWER:**

In line with its Workforce Renewal Strategy, DPI&F is continuously recruiting new staff with contemporary skills and knowledge to accelerate industry development including future-focused science and research; biosecurity; industry extension; and development and trade development activities.

DPI&F continues to align its functions, resources and operational arrangements to ensure they deliver its business in the most effective and efficient way possible.

Our services are constantly being refined in consultation with our stakeholders as we deploy our staff and resources from lower priority projects and activities to high priority functions.

(a) During the 2006-07 financial year the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) participated in the whole-of-government Workforce Skills Alignment Scheme (WSAS) as one element of a workforce renewal strategy to achieve closer alignment between current skills and skills required to meet current and future business/service delivery needs.

Under the WSAS, a total of 117 VER offers were made to staff and 104 offers were accepted with exits between 22 August 2006 and 28 February 2007.

A further 5 staff received and accepted VER offers as a result of their positions becoming redundant.
In accordance with the WSAS guidelines, employees were targeted in low priority areas, not by location, to ensure the department would maintain service levels and retain key capabilities in high priority functional areas.

The breakdown of VERs (planned, offered and accepted) by Business Group and Region is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Group</th>
<th>No. planned</th>
<th>No. offered</th>
<th>No. accepted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Delivery</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Capability</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisheries</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry Development</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>No. offered</th>
<th>No. accepted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-East</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) For the last nine years, DPI&F has actively assisted staff to find alternative employment when their position has changed or abolished as a result of organisational change or technology. Employees are provided with counselling and assistance such as career development and job search techniques, and receive priority access to vacant positions.

The breakdown of VERs offered and accepted by DPI&F staff since 1998 are listed in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>VERs Offered</th>
<th>VERS Accepted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998-1999</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2001</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This compares with the 58 VERs taken by staff from 1996-97 to 1997-98.

(c) During 2006-07, 678 appointments, including graduates in plant pathology, agronomy, auditing and economics, were made in DPI&F.

A breakdown of these appointments (by Business Group, Classification Stream and Region) is outlined in the following tables:
## Business Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corporate Capability</th>
<th>Biosecurity Queensland</th>
<th>Delivery</th>
<th>Regional Delivery</th>
<th>Fisheries</th>
<th>Industry Development</th>
<th>ODG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Classification Stream

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative</th>
<th>Operational</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>SES</th>
<th>SO</th>
<th>Technical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>183</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brisbane</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>North</th>
<th>South</th>
<th>South East</th>
<th>West</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>151</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
QUESTION: (Submitted by Liz Cunningham MP, Member for Gladstone)

In relation to QRAA packages paid to primary producers – For each electorate, how many applications were rejected because the applicants financial institution refused to certify viability?

ANSWER:

During the financial year 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 no applications were rejected for the reason that the financial institution refused to certify viability.

During its decision making process, QRAA completes its own viability assessment of the applicant’s business and it is this internal judgement, based on available information and expertise, that determines whether QRAA considers a business to be viable.
QUESTION: (Submitted by Mike Horan MP, Member for Toowoomba South)

Your Department’s Annual Report does not mention legal fees and your Ministerial Program Statement also does not mention legal fees. Minister, in relation to the use of Private Legal Firms by the Department and its Agencies for expenditures which should be outlined somewhere in the Ministerial Program Statement, can the Minister please specify the identity of each such Private Legal Firm; the total sum paid to each such firm during 2006/2007 for the provision of legal services; the process by which each such Private Legal Firm was selected to provide such legal services; the mechanisms utilised to monitor and review the quality of such legal services; and finally if any private legal firms were contracted by the Department to provide legal advice to the Minister or any of the Ministers staff?

ANSWER:

Annual Financial Statements for the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) are reported in the annual report. Legal fees are defined as supplies and services in the financial statements. During 2006-07 DPI&F incurred the sum of $105,133 in respect of services provided by private legal firms as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Private Legal Firm</th>
<th>Total Sum paid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovation Law</td>
<td>$33,679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francis Abourizk Lightowlers</td>
<td>$20,103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clayton Utz</td>
<td>$51,351</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DPI&F maintains its own in-house legal capability which provides legal services to the department. Additionally, and as a matter of practice, DPI&F supplements its own capability with legal services provided by Crown Law.

Hence, the procurement of services from private legal firms is relatively infrequent, and generally only undertaken where (i) time is of the essence and/or (ii) highly specialist skill is required. In these circumstances, selection is undertaken based on known expertise and/or ability to meet critical time imperatives. In doing so, the department has regard to State Purchasing Policy.

Generally, all advice by private legal firms is settled (reviewed and finalised) by a Partner of the firm who will carry a Principal’s level of professional indemnity insurance on behalf of the firm. Other monitoring processes include internal departmental reviews of the appropriateness of the advice and the fees charged.

No private legal firms were contracted by DPI&F to provide advice to the Minister or his staff.
QUESTION: (Submitted by Mike Horan MP, Member for Toowoomba South)

Will the Minister detail all contracted-out projects undertaken by your Department and associated agencies valued over $100,000 that were not subject to the competitive tendering process broken down and reported separately by name of project; purpose of project; value of project; name of company that was awarded the project and the reason why the project was not taken through the competitive tendering process as required under the State Purchasing Policy?

ANSWER:

Contractors invited or who bid for contracts are selected by a process that is in accordance with the Queensland State Purchasing policy. Where there is a departure from the competitive tendering process, written approval must be gained from the relevant delegated officer.

Financial Officers approving the departure and Purchasing Officers endorsing the departure should:

- Outline the relevant supply market analysis undertaken,
- Be satisfied the purchase will provide value for money,
- Determine if an urgent situation (emergency – Cyclone Larry) exists,
- Be familiar with the agencies Standard and the State Purchasing Policy,
- Be independent of the purchasing activity,
- Retain all documentation relating to the approval for future reference and/or audit purposes.

As at 30 April 2007, the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries had one contracted-out project valued over $100,000 using the sole supplier provision of the competitive tendering process. Details of the project are as follows:

- Name: Leadership Impact Program
- Purpose: Leadership Impact assessment workshop and Interventions
- Value: $128,097
- Provider: Professional Change and Development
- Reason: Sole supplier for the provision of the Human Synergistics “Leadership Impact” program.
QUESTION: (Submitted by Mike Horan MP, Member for Toowoomba South)

With reference to the "$130.9 million in high priority R & D to improve productivity or develop new products to meet market demands" mentioned on page 1-2 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statement. Will the Minister outline:

1. The timeframe for this budget items and the timeframe for allocation of this budget
2. The names of each program to be administered under the program and the budget allocation for each of these programs (reported separately)?
3. The total amount of funding for Research and Development that has been received by external sources (reported separately for each financial year) for the financial years 2002/03, 2003/04, 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2006/07 and the external funding budgeted for in 2007-08?

ANSWER:

1. The budget of $130.9 million for Research, Development and Extension (RD&E) in the 2007-08 Ministerial Portfolio Statement is an indicative budget only. The budget allocation process for 2007-08 is currently still underway so the final allocations cannot be provided at this point. Once allocated it is expected the funding will be expended in 2007-08.

2. While the budget allocations have not yet been finalised, the 2007-08 RD&E Programs are as follows:
   - Beef, Sheep & Goats
   - Feedgrain & Fodder
   - Forestry
   - Intensive Animals
   - Sugar
   - Vegetables
   - Value Added Foods
   - Fruit & Nuts
   - Fisheries
   - Grains, Pulses & Cotton
   - Lifestyle Horticulture
   - Research Infrastructure
   - Enabling Technologies

3. Annual external funding received by the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries for RD&E (as published in the relevant Annual Reports) is as follows:
   - 2002-03: $43.8 million
   - 2003-04: $36.6 million
   - 2004-05: $38.7 million
   - 2005-06: $40.7 million
   - 2006-07: $44.3 million

The funding for 2007-08 has not yet been finalised but it is expected to be below the 2006-07 funding due to the drought and its effect on production and research levies.
QUESTION: (Submitted by Liz Cunningham MP, Member for Gladstone)

MPS 1 – 5: Services delivered for biosecurity include 'prevention and surveillance for pests, diseases, and agricultural and veterinary chemicals and contaminants' etc.

How can proper surveillance and prevention be provided when staffing levels are being reduced (1-8) as well as overall budget expenditure in this division?

ANSWER:

The services delivered for biosecurity, including prevention and surveillance for pests, diseases, and agricultural and veterinary chemicals and contaminants will be provided through Biosecurity Queensland, an initiative of the Government which commenced operations as a new business group of the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries on 1 March 2007.

Bringing together the existing biosecurity resources of the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Natural Resources and Water, Biosecurity Queensland is building the capacity and expertise to deal with the wide range of biosecurity threats to our economy, environment and way of life.

As indicated in the Staffing table on page 1-8 of the MPS, the staffing levels for Biosecurity Queensland show a reduction for the 2007-08 estimate of average Full-Time Equivalents (FTE's) of 595 from the 2006-07 Estimated Actual figure of 670.

However, as noted at the end of the table, the reduction can be explained as follows:

• Note 4 - The variation in the total is a net result of Machinery of Government changes and the conclusion of the sugarcane smut emergency response and National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program (NRIFAEP) activities during 2006-07. This Machinery of Government included 181 staff from the NR&W moving to Biosecurity Queensland from 1 March 2007 as part of an election commitment to manage all biosecurity matters within a single agency in Queensland.

• Note 5 - Average FTE's are still being negotiated as part of the Machinery of Government and these figures are indicative only.

There is no significant change in staffing levels for the core biosecurity programs.

The 2007-08 Biosecurity Output Income Statement on Page 1-28 of the MPS has an estimated Total Cost for 2007-08 of $82,531,000. This is a decrease of $20,606,000 from the 2006-07 estimated actual of $103,137,000. As stated in the Notes to the table this decrease is mainly due to the cessation of expenses for NRIFAEP.

However, it should also be noted that the estimated actual for 2006-07 represented an increase in the 2006-07 adjusted budget amount that was mainly due to emergency responses to pest and disease incursions including Sugarcane Smut and Electric Ants, NLIS and NRIFAEP.
QUESTION: (Submitted by Mike Horan MP, Member for Toowoomba South)

With reference to page 1-33 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statement and in particular "Compliance, Enforcement and Regulatory activities". Will the Minister outline:

1. How the percentages for M (ii – v) were derived and what are the numerical figures that these percentages represent?

2. For the financial years 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07 how many convictions have arisen from:
   (a) Illegal oyster take
   (b) Crab pot theft
   (c) Safety rule violations for jetskis (policed by Boating and Fisheries)
   (d) Taking under-sized blue swimmer crabs
   (e) Illegal foreign fishing
   (f) Requirement to remove a pectoral fin from coral reef fin fish or Spanish mackerel
   (g) marine pollution
   (h) limiting unlicensed prawn catches

ANSWER:

1. In relation to M(ii) and M(iii) the percentage compliance is calculated by dividing the total number of compliant units by the total number of units inspected multiplied by 100.

   In relation to M(ii) for the 2006-2007 financial year to the end of March 2007 a 96% compliance rate was achieved. Complete financial year figures are not yet available, however, the estimated 2006-07 actual compliance rate of 96% is based on the results to date.

   In relation to M(iii) for the 2006-2007 financial year to the end of March 2007 no offences were detected. Complete financial year figures are not yet available, however, the estimated 2006-7 actual compliance rate of 100% is based on the results to date.

   In relation to M(iv) a formula which takes account of the total amount of quota taken and the amount of quota allocated is used to determine compliance with quota arrangements. For the 2006-2007 fishing season, none of these fishery quotas were exceeded.

   In relation to M(v) a formula which takes into account the total number of days used and the total number of days returned to fishers after successful challenge is used to determine the accuracy of VMS in this respect.

2. Details of convictions for offences are as follows:
   (a) With respect to illegal oyster take there were two successful prosecutions for the offence of taking an oyster from where it was growing in 2005-06.
(b) Crab pot theft is a matter for the Queensland Police Service as theft is a criminal offence.

(c) With respect to safety rule violations for jetskis, the majority of offences were for exceeding speed limits, failing to carry the prescribed safety equipment and operating a Personal Water Craft without a licence.

(d) In 2005-06, five FINs and five cautions were issued for the possession of undersized blue swimmer crabs. There were also two successful prosecutions. For the 2006-07 financial year to the end of May 2007, eight FINs and 11 cautions were issued.

(e) With respect to illegal foreign fishing, whilst the Queensland Government has an interest in this issue, this is Australian Government responsibility.

(f) With respect to removal of pectoral fin, in 2004-05 there were three successful prosecutions. For 2005-06 there were three successful prosecutions and the issue of 13 FINs and 14 cautions. For the 2006-07 financial year to the end of May 2007, 32 FINs and 12 cautions had been issued, with one prosecution pending.

(g) With respect to marine pollution or ship sourced sewage in 2005-06 there was only one offence detected. In 2006-07 there were no offences detected. Details for 2003-04 and 2004-05 are unavailable.

(h) I am unable to answer the request for information concerning unlicensed prawn catches as the question is unclear.
QUESTION: (Submitted by Mike Horan MP, Member for Toowoomba South)

With reference to Biosecurity Queensland that your Department is responsible for and is mentioned on pages 1-21 to 1-28. Will the Minister outline:

1. The total amount of funds, staff and departmental functions transferred from the other departments (reported separately by department, functions and funds) to the Biosecurity unit.

2. Name of each unit and the total number of employees working within each unit, their classifications and job titles (reported separately)

ANSWER:

1. and 2.

Biosecurity Queensland currently has 695 positions. While the Machinery of Government negotiations with the Department of Natural Resources and Water (NRW) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are nearly complete, there is still some fine tuning being undertaken and these numbers may change.

The staff numbers (excluding casuals but including funded vacant positions) transferred from the other departments to Biosecurity Queensland and classification are:

NRW
A total of 190 positions comprising the following officers: 1 Senior Executive Service (SES), 1 Senior Officer (SO), 39 Professional (PO), 59 Technical (TO), 48 Administrative (AO) and 42 Operational (OO) involved with land protection and sustainable landscapes.

EPA
Funding equivalent to 0.5 of an administrative position (AO)

The total budget for Biosecurity Queensland is approximately $60 million. As negotiations regarding the final transfers from NRW and EPA are not yet complete, this figure is subject to change. However, the notional transfer from the other agencies is: NRW approximately $25.618 million and EPA approximately $46,000.

The current structure of Biosecurity Queensland consists of the following units under a Chief Executive Officer and a Chief Biosecurity Officer: Directorate, Animal Biosecurity, Animal Welfare, Biosecurity Operations, Chemical Use and Food Safety, Fire Ant Control Centre, Plant Biosecurity and Invasive Plants and Animals.
QUESTION: Submitted by Mike Horan MP, Member for Toowoomba South

In relation to each Department and Agency covered by the Ministerial Portfolio Statement please advise full details of:

(a) All consultants [individual or corporate] utilized by each Department or Agency in 2006/07;

(b) Where a corporate consultant has been utilised, the names and business addresses of the principal consultants on each project and of the directors of each corporate consultant;

(c) All sums paid to all such consultants in 2006/07 and yet to be paid in 2007/08;

(d) The scope of the task of each consultant employed in 2006/07;

(e) The identity of each consultant invited to bid or who did bid for such consultancies in 2006/07.

ANSWER:

The following details are provided on consultancies for the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries and agencies (Forestry Plantations Queensland and QRAA) covered by the Ministerial Portfolio Statement for the Primary Industries and Fisheries portfolio.

Information in relation to details of the principal consultant or the director of corporate consultancies has not been provided as the engagement of the consultancy is with the firm rather than individual directors or principal consultants.

Consultants invited or who bid for consultancies are selected by a process that is in accordance with the Queensland State Purchasing policy. Therefore, the identity of each applicant is not disclosed as all offers are treated as private and confidential.

Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Consultant</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Payments to date in 2006-07 (GST exclusive)</th>
<th>Payments expected to be made in 2007-08 (GST exclusive)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Woolmark Company Pty Ltd 369 Royal Parade Parkville Vic 3052</td>
<td>Evaluate current and future demand for ethical apparel products at retail and in particular, to evaluate demand for ethical wool apparel. Funded by the Australian Government.</td>
<td>$35,991.00</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr David J.H. Watson PO Box 75 Mooloolaba Qld 4557</td>
<td>Review of the Food Production (Safety) Act 2000</td>
<td>$15,000.00</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Nutrition Consulting Services 13 MacKenzie Street Toowoomba Qld 4350</td>
<td>Delivery of Nutrition courses</td>
<td>$25,897.00</td>
<td>$28,003.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine Harvest Australia Pty Ltd PO Box 117 Rosny Park Tas 7018</td>
<td>Contribute to DPI&amp;F's Finfish aquaculture RD&amp;E review</td>
<td>$5,584.82</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Consultant</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Payments to date in 2006-07 (GST exclusive)</td>
<td>Payments expected to be made in 2007-08 (GST exclusive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian Wilson Wine Solutions</td>
<td>Market research</td>
<td>$5,693.06</td>
<td>$5,734.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 Greenvale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gisborne Vic 3437</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMS Consulting Group</td>
<td>Implementation and health of the SAP project</td>
<td>$30,178.82</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-18, 175 Eagle Street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane Qld 4000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nittany Dairy Nutrition Inc</td>
<td>Delivery of Advanced Nutrition Courses</td>
<td>$14,331.06</td>
<td>$15,688.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9355 Buffalo Road</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mifflinburg PA 17844 US</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Anthony J Pressland</td>
<td>Scoping Study for Tropical &amp; Subtropical Science</td>
<td>$19,269.99</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Wallawa Street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenmore Qld 4069</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barry McDonald</td>
<td>Develop an indicative framework paper for DPI&amp;F's Regional Infrastructure for next 10 years</td>
<td>$8,000.00</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Cullen Crescent Eagleby Qld 4207</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PricewaterhouseCoopers</td>
<td>Review of National Agriculture Monitoring Steering Committee (NAMS) in accordance with DPI&amp;F Terms of Reference</td>
<td>$21,304.14</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darling Park Tower 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201 Sussex Street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney NSW 2000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Peter Riddles VicBio Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Providing a strategy for future investment in agricultural biotechnology</td>
<td>$20,000.00</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO Box 4158</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Lucia Sth Qld 4067</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arena Organisational Consultants</td>
<td>Analysis of departmental outputs</td>
<td>$19,400.00</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 11/97 Creek Street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane Qld 4000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PricewaterhouseCoopers</td>
<td>Review of the owner reimbursement program for Sugarcane Smut in Queensland</td>
<td>$15,000.00</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverside Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123 Eagle Street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane Qld 4000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr David J.H. Watson</td>
<td>Review of the membership of the Food Safety Advisory Committee</td>
<td>$6,000.00</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO Box 75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mooloolaba Qld 4557</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildlife Management International Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Develop a process and research project proposal that will examine the ecological, economic &amp; social impact of commercial crocodile egg harvesting from the wild in Queensland.</td>
<td>$9,600.00</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO Box 530</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanderson NT 0813</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational Development Options Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Evaluation of leadership development initiatives report production.</td>
<td>$8,000.00</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO Box 1040</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt Ommaney Qld 4074</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne Business School University of</td>
<td>Joint consultancy with Organisational Development Options. Evaluation of leadership development initiatives.</td>
<td>$18,150.00</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 Leicester Street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlton Vic 3053</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warwick Yates &amp; Associates Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Analysis of competitiveness of the beef supply chain</td>
<td>$50,386.36</td>
<td>$5,038.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO Box 10348</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide Street Brisbane</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberts Evaluation Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Monitoring and evaluating Fitzroy &amp; Burdekin Future Beef Program</td>
<td>$9,090.91</td>
<td>$22,351.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>311/343 Little Collins Street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne Vic 3000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quay Connection Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Analysis of info &amp; trends to determine the viability &amp; feasibility of an international trade type fair focussed on agrifood &amp; fibre</td>
<td>$34,832.00</td>
<td>$14,928.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43 Booth Street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annandale NSW</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay Marsden</td>
<td>Preparation of Report - &quot;Improve fertility in 2006 BIARC</td>
<td>$700.00</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Crescent Street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cudgen NSW 2487</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Forestry Plantations Queensland:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Consultant</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Payments to date in 2006-07 (GST exclusive)</th>
<th>Payments expected to be made in 2007-08 (GST exclusive)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARRB Group Ltd</td>
<td>Review and report on road operations</td>
<td>$19,850.00</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gibson Quality-AAS Pty Ltd PO Box 1046 Spring Hill BRISBANE QLD</td>
<td>Commercial review of FPQ radio network.</td>
<td>$31,490.25</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree Crop Technologies Pty Ltd PO Box 575 Ashgrove BRISBANE QLD</td>
<td>Western Whitegum genetics research.</td>
<td>$11,407.87</td>
<td>$8,592.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Solutions Pty Ltd PO Box 1156 Fortitude Valley BRISBANE QLD</td>
<td>Completion of visitor use survey and report</td>
<td>$71,800.00</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### QRRA:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Consultant</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Payments to date in 2006-07 (GST exclusive)</th>
<th>Payments expected to be made in 2007-08 (GST exclusive)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gibsons Digital Innovation</td>
<td>ICT Security audit and ICT technical recommendations</td>
<td>$22,690.00</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FILEforce</td>
<td>Review current filing systems and make recommendations</td>
<td>$8,400.00</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
QUESTION: (Submitted by Mike Horan MP, Member for Toowoomba South)

I refer to the drought assistance programs mentioned in the QRAA section of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements.

Can the Minister please advise:

(a) The budgeted and actual expenditure for the Drought Carry-On scheme in 2006/07.

(b) The budgeted and actual expenditure for the Drought Recovery Scheme in 2006/07.

(c) The number of Drought Carry-On applications received, approved, denied and the value of approved applications in 2006/07 (reported separately as per Opposition Estimates Question in 2004)

(d) The number of Drought Recovery scheme applications received, approved, denied and the value of approved applications in 2006/07 (reported separately as per Opposition Estimates Question in 2004)

(e) The amount of funding provided by the Commonwealth Government for Exceptional Circumstances in 2006/07 and the amount of funding provided by the Queensland Government for Exceptional Circumstances in 2006/07 (reported separately).

ANSWER:

(a) & (b)

The budget for both the Drought Carry-On and Drought Recovery Schemes combined in 2006-2007 was $2,000,000. Actual expenditure for 2006-2007 under the Drought Carry-On Scheme and Drought Recovery Scheme was $2,097,000 and $661,251 respectively.

(c) Details on the number and value of applications under the Drought Carry-On Scheme for 2006-2007 are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applications received</th>
<th>78</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applications approved</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applications declined</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ Approved</td>
<td>$2,380,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
1. The difference in applications received to those approved/declined, represents those awaiting assessment.
2. The difference between actual expenditure of $2,097,000 and approvals of $2,380,000 reflects those applications approved in 2006-07 but final draw down (expend) has not yet occurred.
(d) Details on the number and value of applications under the Drought Recovery Scheme for 2006-2007 are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applications received</th>
<th>16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applications approved</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applications declined</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ Approved</td>
<td>$877,439</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
1. The difference in applications received to those approved/declined, represents the carry forward of an application from the previous financial year.
2. The difference between actual expenditure of $661,251 and approvals of $877,439 reflects those applications approved in 2006-07 but final draw down (expend) has not yet occurred.

(e) Exceptional Circumstances is a Commonwealth Scheme under which the States and Territories contribute an agreed 10% of the interest rate subsidies.

The amount of funding from the Commonwealth in 2006-2007 for Exceptional Circumstances was $73.9 million with the State contributing $8.2 million.

In addition to the schemes administered by QRAA, the Queensland Government also provides other direct financial drought assistance to producers through the Drought Relief Assistance Scheme (DRAS) and other drought support preparedness programs through the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Number</th>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Jo-Ann Miller MP - Bundamba</td>
<td>Minister, I refer to MPS 1-12. How is DPI&amp;F contributing to the development of a <strong>high quality hardwood plantation industry</strong> in Qld?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Peter Lawlor MP – Southport</td>
<td>In reference to MPS 1-1, 1-2 and 1-14 can the Minister please outline commitments made by the department to deliver on <strong>water use efficiency projects and initiatives</strong> in primary industries?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Ken Hayward MP – Kallangur</td>
<td>I refer to MPS 1-20. How is the new <strong>Biosecurity Queensland</strong> progressing and what benefits will flow from its formation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Evan Moorhead MP – Waterford / Chair</td>
<td>Minister, in a competitive employment marketplace what is the department doing to ensure that people with the <strong>appropriate skills</strong> are available to the primary industries sector? Please refer to MPS 1-13.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Ken Hayward MP – Kallangur</td>
<td>With reference to MPS 1-13, can the Minister please explain the department’s commitment to <strong>improving business capabilities</strong> of Queensland primary producers and how this will enhance productivity and sustainability outcomes for the Primary Industries sector?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>Jo-Ann Miller MP - Bundamba</td>
<td>I refer to MPS 1-4 and 1-13. What are <strong>agribusiness precincts</strong> and what value will they offer Queensland producers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>Peter Lawlor MP – Southport</td>
<td>Minister in regards to the MPS 1-11, how has your portfolio been able to assist producers suffering the <strong>long term drought</strong> as well as those who are now recovering from drought?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>Evan Moorhead MP – Waterford / Chair</td>
<td>I refer to MPS 1-21. In regards to the <strong>recent Asian honey bee incursion in Cairns</strong> how would you assess the response of <strong>Biosecurity Queensland</strong>?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
09  (Jo-Ann Miller MP - Bundamba)

I refer to MPS 1-14: What is DPI&F doing to promote trade and exports in the Asia Pacific region.

10  (Ken Hayward MP – Kallangur)

In respect of MPS 1-15, how has the department supported the Australian Centre for Lifestyle Horticulture?
Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries

List of documents tabled by
the Hon Timothy Mulherin MP at the Hearing
Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.46 am): The true measure of a good government is its ability to provide for our future generations. Unfortunately, for the future generations of Queensland the legacy of the Beattie government will not be a good one. The legacy of the Beattie government will be a massive failure induced debt, a crippling interest bill, inadequate infrastructure and poor-quality services. In this budget bill before the House, it is obvious that the Beattie government lacks the vision and the economic prowess to properly manage Queensland’s future.

Queensland is enjoying unprecedented economic prosperity on the back of the global resources boom. Despite record levels of income from mining royalties, GST revenue and property taxes, this government has failed to secure Queensland’s future—it has failed to secure Queensland’s future up until now and it has failed to secure Queensland’s future in this budget. The whole of Australia is enjoying the longest period of economic expansion in history. The economic boom is led by the resource states, of which Queensland is foremost. But the Queensland government has squandered the opportunities afforded by such prosperity. The Beattie government has been handed a once-in-a-generation opportunity to secure the future for Queensland while we are enjoying such good economic times. Over the past nine years the government should have been strategically and comprehensively planning for the future, it should have invested in visionary projects and it should have modernised service delivery. But it has failed to do so and now our children will be forced to pay for the debt that this government is inflicting on them as it frantically tries to catch up after nine years of that chronic failure.

We have heard a lot from the government about record levels of spending for infrastructure in this budget. But when a government spends nothing on infrastructure for nine years, any increase is a record. When a government has been underspending on infrastructure for nine years and then suddenly starts trying to catch up by spending in a panic, there is no credit to be gained by claiming that it is a record level of spending.

Nothing better illustrates the worth of this budget than to make the comparison with what is happening at the federal level. There is no greater contrast in financial management styles than the contrast between the socialist Beattie Labor government and the conservative federal coalition government. When the coalition took over federal government 11 years ago, it inherited a $96 billion debt—the legacy of successive socialist Labor governments. Through responsible economic management, it eliminated that debt. By the end of the 2005-06 financial year, it was zero. The federal government is now delivering strong surpluses. That surplus is predicted to be almost $12 billion this financial year. The federal government is investing that money for the future and all of us as Australians will benefit, and we will benefit for generations to come.

Therein lies the paradox. While the Commonwealth government has repaid Labor’s high levels of debt and is investing its budget surplus for the future, the Beattie government has been squandering the spoils of economic prosperity and it is now borrowing at dangerous and unprecedented levels. The
Speech by Jeff Seeney extracted from Hansard of Thursday, 7 June 2007

contrast could not be more stark. This reinforces what we all know and what I have said for a long time: we cannot trust a socialist Labor government to manage the money and balance the books. It just cannot do it.

Queenslanders need to be warned by what they see in this state budget. It is an indication of what they will get if they elect a Labor government at the federal level. We will see the return of record levels of Commonwealth debt, placing enormous upward pressure on interest rates. We all remember the dark days of the Keating era. We remember the interest rates when they were through the roof. We had record high levels of unemployment, we had the recession we had to have and we had the unions running the workplace to the detriment of productivity and employment.

Queensland today is being managed in the same irresponsible socialist style. We on the conservative side of politics believe in responsible economic management. We have a track record of success in economic management and we can rightfully be proud of that track record. Our track record is a track record of reducing debt levels, it is a track record of investing for the future and it is a track record of creating a climate for growth. Unlike the socialist Beattie government, we do not believe in squandering Queensland's future, we do not believe in burdening our children and our children's children with debt and we do not believe in crippling interest payments.

The people of Queensland have every right to ask today: where has our share of the good times gone? Where has the share of the good times that rightfully belongs to the people of Queensland gone? Why, at the top of an economic boom, do we in Queensland have to borrow at such high levels when other governments are able to save money for the future? The answer lies clearly in the Beattie government's track record. It is a track record of failure and crisis creation.

The Beattie crisis list is a long one and we know it too well. There is the water crisis, the health crisis, the ambulance crisis, the electricity crisis and the child protection crisis. Then there are the emerging crises—the housing affordability crisis and the traffic and public transport crisis. No other government in history has failed so miserably in so many areas of core responsibility. That chronic and systemic failure will cost Queenslanders for generations to come.

Queenslanders are well aware who is responsible. They know who is responsible when they cannot see a doctor and cannot get into the hospital. They know who is responsible when the ambulance takes too long to get to them. They know who is responsible when their kids are not meeting the national benchmarks at school. Queenslanders are well aware that they will be forced to pay more for their water because the Beattie government did not invest in any water infrastructure for the past nine years. Queenslanders are well aware that while their cars sit idling in traffic the Beattie government has not invested in roads for the past nine years. They are well aware that they cannot afford to buy a home because the Beattie government has failed to plan for growth, it has failed to release land and it has failed to adjust property taxes. Queenslanders are well aware that they get left behind at train stations and bus stops because the Beattie government has failed to invest in public transport. Queenslanders are well aware that they will be forced to pay more for electricity because the Beattie government did not have the foresight to invest when it should have.

Queensland is a resource based state in a country enjoying a worldwide resources boom. However, this budget makes it clear that at the top of that economic boom Queenslanders are paying more and getting less. Nine years of ineptitude and failure have necessitated a focus on crisis management, and it is reflected in this budget. This is a budget from a government that operates in a continual sense of panic, focusing only on the latest crisis. This budget is playing catch-up big time, and that is why this budget is borrowing record amounts in a climate of record revenue increases.

For nine years the Premier has got away with putting his hand on his heart, looking at the camera and promising to fix his failures. But now the financial cost of those failures is apparent for all to see. There is no better example for the people of south-east Queensland of the financial cost of management failure for this government than the way it has created and managed the water crisis. For years we stood in this parliament and urged the Beattie government to build dams, to build a recycled water pipeline, to build something to secure our future water supplies. We were laughed at and we were criticised. We were ridiculed and we were pilloried, but we were right. Now, in a mad panic, there are crews working 24 hours a day incurring huge unnecessary costs and paying a premium for everything because of the overheated construction environment resulting from this government's failure to act. Now it will cost many times more. No-one knows how many times more, but it will cost many times more for these projects than if they had been planned properly and built in a responsible, professional way. Queenslanders will have to pay. Queenslanders will have to pay today and they will have to pay for years to come.

Health is another massive planning and management failure that has horrendous financial costs. Despite the huge amounts of money consumed, Queensland Health is still marred by horror stories, with patients left waiting, botched treatments and senior medical staff leaving in droves, sick of the culture of bullying and harassment fostered and tolerated by the Beattie government. The government is throwing more money at health but fewer Queenslanders are being treated and patients are forced to wait longer.
Speech by Jeff Seeney extracted from Hansard of Thursday, 7 June 2007

There are 30 per cent more people waiting for urgent category 1 or 2 surgery than there were five years ago, yet the health budget has increased by more than 50 per cent over the same period. It is incomprehensible to ordinary Queenslanders, but it is about management.

The Ambulance Service is another prime example of the Beattie government’s ineptitude. Labor’s tax on electricity bills promised to provide the world’s best service. That was the promise. It has collected the best part of half a billion dollars over four years, yet the Ambulance Service has never been worse. Response times are blowing out, and long-serving and dedicated staff are leaving in droves because the culture of bullying and harassment is rife—and those staff are being threatened with $3,000 fines if they speak out. The response in this budget is to throw money at it again—$50 million—in the hope that it will go away.

Climate change is shaping up as another Beattie government financial black hole. Focused solely on clean coal technology, this budget ignores workable low-input technology carbon sink and offset trading systems that could be up and running within months, rather than years. Offset programs would provide a real boost to regional Queensland with sustainable jobs, but this budget ignores them. It ignores the coalition’s proposals—the voluntary carbon trading scheme, the free registration for hybrid cars and the mandating of ethanol in petrol. New South Wales has mandated ethanol, but it is too hard for the Beattie government here in Queensland.

Infrastructure delivery is one of the great failures of this government. The Beattie government just does not have the capacity to manage projects on time or on budget. I had a quick flick through the capital works statement this year and compared it to last year’s, and there are nearly 100 projects that the government said would be finished this financial year that are late—100 projects that were announced with much fanfare this time last year and still have not been delivered. Add to this the enormous revisions in costs on a significant number of projects and we get a true picture of what this government is capable—or in this case incapable—of delivering.

I am genuinely concerned for the people of Queensland, and this budget heightens my concern. The danger signs we see in this budget are only the beginning of huge financial problems to come. We are already borrowing at dangerous and unprecedented levels on early cost estimates. Wait until the government starts building those big projects and then the true cost will be realised. Unfortunately, our kids will be the ones who will have to pay for those inflated costs.

I will now look at the budget in some detail and examine the numbers. Most of the announcements, predictably enough, were drip-fed to the media, some announced several times, some even rehashed from last year and announced again. But we expect that. If there is one strength that this government has is in packaging, spinning and pitching media opportunities. For the last nine years it has worked tirelessly to create an illusion of action and progress. But that illusion has collapsed with this budget.

If I could sum up the budget I would say that it was an empty budget from a tired government in a panic to paper over its failures with borrowed money. It is a budget from a government unable to manage, unable to plan and unable to invest for tomorrow. It is a budget that is all about buckets of borrowed cash to pay for management failures and nine years of doing nothing. There is no thought, no direction, no leadership and no way of addressing the fundamental problems that have created the financial problems that are obvious.

The budget is one of record revenues. The state government is receiving record revenue from its own taxes and record revenue from the GST. The state taxation revenue has increased by more than 80 per cent under the stewardship of the Beattie government and GST revenue has increased by 60 per cent since it was introduced in 2001. State taxation revenue—that is, the government’s own source revenue—is up 13.2 per cent in one year alone in this budget. From the previous year to the year dealt with in this budget, the government’s own source revenue has risen 13.2 per cent. State taxation revenue in 2006-07 totalled $8.375 billion, which exceeded the GST revenues of $8.053 billion. When the state tax revenue starts to eclipse that river of gold which we have come to know as the GST revenue, then Queenslanders are simply being taxed too much. Our claim of being the lowest taxed state is but a distant memory.

So the government has received record revenues. Now we need to look at expenditure. Recurrent expenditure is the cost that the government incurs doing business. The budget shows that that cost is clearly out of control. Total employee and operating expenses alone grew by 12 per cent last year to almost $20 billion, which would be fine if we were getting a proportionate increase in service delivery, but everyone knows we are not. This is not a one-off; it is a well established and easy-to-see trend. In fact, the same government expenditure grew by 13 per cent in 2005-06, 10 per cent the year before and 12 per cent in 2003-04. If we take away wage rises, this means that the government’s recurrent expenditure has increased by 30 per cent over four years. It is spending 30 per cent more now, after subtracting the wage rises, than it was four years ago.

If that increase had been responsible expenditure Queenslanders should have received a 30 per cent increase in services from this government over the last four years. For that to be true, our roads
Speech by Jeff Seeney extracted from Hansard of Thursday, 7 June 2007

should be 30 per cent better, 30 per cent more patients should be getting treated in our hospitals, 30 per cent more ambulances should be on the road with 30 per cent more paramedics, there should be 30 per cent more police officers, with 30 per cent more equipment and buildings and so on across-the-board. But, of course, we have not seen this level of increase in services and infrastructure. In fact, as we have illustrated in this parliament over and over and over again, service delivery has gone backwards. That 30 per cent increase in recurrent expenditure has been wasted. It has been wasted on poor management and it has been wasted on crisis management. Rather than having a surplus to invest in hard assets this government has had to borrow and borrow big time. Despite all of the government’s income streams being awash with cash, that cash has been wasted and now debt per capita is ballooning.

Government owned corporations in particular have been forced to borrow heavily. In 2006-07 this sector borrowed $18.6 billion of the government’s overall borrowings of $22.53 billion. Almost all of the debt was in the GOC sector. The state government’s borrowings are forecast to grow to $51.73 billion in 2010-11. In three years time this budget tells us that our total debt will be almost $52 billion, with the government owned businesses, the GOC sector, forecast to hold $32.38 billion of that debt.

It is a tried and true strategy to try to hide government debt in the GOC sector but the interest cost still has to be met. To meet the interest cost in the government owned corporations sector, Queenslanders will have to pay more for electricity, water, transport and the other services that the GOCs provide. There is nowhere else to get the money from. The general government sector, which is the sector other than the GOCs—the government’s day-to-day operations, if you like—is forecast to have a borrowing of $19.4 billion by 2010-11. The interest expenses associated with this debt will be $1.1 billion annually. They are the budget figures, not mine. It means that this government will have to find $1.1 billion every year to meet interest payments. The amount of $1.1 billion out of the current account every year will have to be found by this government and by every government that follows it. That interest bill will need to be paid.

The opportunity cost associated with meeting that interest payment will mean that the government will have to forgo one major 700-bed hospital every year or 30 new fully equipped public schools every year. That $1.1 billion would have employed more than 3,000 extra police officers every year; it would have built a whole heap of roads and busways every year; and, probably most pertinent of all, it would have built three 200-megalitre desalination plants every year. That is the cost of that $1.1 billion in interest.

At a time of bright economic sunshine such unprecedented levels of borrowing highlight a fundamental failure to manage the economy. What is most troubling to me is that if one looks at the budget papers there is no provision for the repayment of the debt—none at all—just the payment of the interest, which means that the government is simply passing the debt on to future generations. It is a strategy of ‘borrow now and let someone else pay it back’. That is a terrible strategy. It is a strategy that should frighten all Queenslanders and make them concerned for the generations of Queenslanders who will follow.

The lack of economic management skills in the Beattie government further increases the likelihood of a new range of state taxes and charges that must follow to pay those interest costs. The first of these, announced by the Treasurer on Tuesday, is the increased tax grab on the sale of motor vehicles. Last year, vehicle registration duties provided $285 million to the government. The increases in duties are expected to produce an additional $200 million in revenue. Overall, this represents a 70 per cent increase in the government’s coffers. But those large figures hide the true impact. That increase in tax will have an impact on every Queenslander every time they go to buy a car—a new car, a second-hand car, a car for their kids or a car for their wife. Every time they go to buy a car they will be slugged to pay for the Beattie government’s failures.

The government will not use this additional taxation for mental health facilities. Nobody believes that. It needs it to fund its blow-outs in recurrent expenditure. So what is the alternative? The alternative is better management. The alternative is better management of the increased revenue streams and better management of the out-of-control recurrent expenditure. That is the key. Management is the key. That is what the federal government has done so well and the Beattie government has done so badly. The alternative is managing to avoid the crisis rather than constantly being consumed by high-cost crisis management. The alternative is to start looking beyond the next crisis and the next ministerial failure. The alternative is to get the recurrent expenditure under control, instead of letting it blow out year after year, and the alternative is to curb the continuing blow-out in the costs that escalate year after year. The alternative is to prudently and responsibly manage the revenue streams that are currently at such high levels. The alternative is to prudently manage the rivers of gold while they continue to flow by dint of good fortune. The alternative is to manage the GST revenue, manage the resources boom revenue and manage the huge state based tax revenue during this time of economic good times.

The alternative is to prudently and responsibly manage these revenues so that we have some money to invest in infrastructure and we do not have to borrow at these frightening levels. The alternative...
Speech by Jeff Seeney extracted from Hansard of Thursday, 7 June 2007

is to start planning properly and deliver infrastructure on time and not in a mad rush or in a high-cost rush when the crisis hits. The alternative is to provide service delivery by focusing on front-line staff, reforming the culture of bullying and harassment that prevails under the Beattie government and increasing the efficiency and productivity in the public sector workforce. That is the alternative and it is not rocket science; it is good management. It is the sort of good management that has delivered such wonderful dividends to every Australian when it has been applied to government at a federal level.

The Queensland coalition wants to see real action in key policy areas like traffic management and public transport, climate change and housing affordability, and we have taken the lead on those issues. The Queensland coalition has already introduced a number of initiatives to focus the government's attention on these critical policy areas. We changed our shadow cabinet make-up to focus on traffic management and public transport. We created a housing affordability shadow ministry before the government acknowledged it was an issue. I was pleased to see that in this budget the government has included some small housing affordability measures, but they are small. The budget contains a commitment to allocate some money from the sale of assets to what is called social housing. This is a bandaid measure that does not address the underlying causes of the housing affordability crisis but it plays to the Labor socialist ideology of public housing, in this case funded by the sale of our electricity assets. We believe in attacking the cause of housing affordability. We believe in addressing the issue so that Queenslanders can own their own home, so that they can afford their own home.

The coalition's actions have forced the government to pay attention to these issues, which is why today I am announcing that we are extending the portfolio of the shadow minister for environment to include the issue of sustainability. The shadow minister for the environment and sustainability will work across all industry sectors as well as local governments to develop policies and to encourage long-term environmental sustainability. We have already released a number of initiatives on climate change and sustainability — and the government has picked up some of them and they have been used in its recently announced strategy.

We have also introduced draft legislation for carbon trading and free registration for hybrid cars and we call on the government to support those ideas. We are leading the debate in climate change and we are also leading the way with our focus on traffic, transport and housing affordability. Over the coming months we will be releasing a series of initiatives in these areas and I am happy for the government to pick them up, too. We do not mind that the government copies our ideas; it has been doing it for years. I just hope it does not take five years to implement these ideas as was the case with our water policy.

I conclude by saying that future generations will judge this Beattie government budget harshly because future generations will be forced to live with the outcome of this inept government's failures and its expensive, panic attempts to rectify them. Despite the economic boom and despite its increased revenues, this budget is underpinned by dangerous and unprecedented levels of borrowings — levels of borrowings that have had to be made to pay for the management failures of the Beattie government. However, this budget has given no thought to redressing the fundamental problems that the government itself has created. It is a budget that erodes the great legacy of previous coalition governments because it is a budget that erodes Queensland's great economic strength. In this budget the Beattie government has had to load future generations of Queenslanders with debt. It has had to load future Queenslanders with debt to replace the money that it has squandered on its failures. That failure induced debt will be the legacy of the Treasurer, Anna Bligh. It will be a coalition government that will have to repay that debt in the future.