



Agriculture and Environment Committee

Consideration of 2015/2016 Portfolio Budget Estimates

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Minutes of 2015 Estimates Meetings

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES



Agriculture and Environment Committee

Meeting No. E1

Wednesday 15 July 2015, at 8.43am

Room 5.30, Level 5, Parliamentary Annexe

1. **Members Present:** Ms Jennifer Howard, Chair, Member for Ipswich
Mr Stephen Bennett, Member for Burnett
Mrs Julianne Gilbert, Member for Mackay
Mr Linus Power, Member for Logan
Mr Edward Sorensen, Member for Hervey Bay

Apologies: Mr Robert Katter, Member for Mount Isa

In attendance: Rob Hansen, Research Director
Mrs Maureen Coorey, Executive Assistant

2. **Inquiry timetable**

Moved Mr Bennett seconded Mr Power:

That the draft timetable be agreed to:

Monday 27 July 10.00am	Deadline for the committee to provide their questions on notice to the research director. (SO 182(1), 182(2)).
Wednesday 29 July 5.00pm	Deadline for the research director to forward the committee's pre-hearing questions, after vetting by the chair, to ministers (SO 182 (5)).
Thursday 20 August 10.00am	Deadline for Ministers Byrne and Miles to provide the research director their answers to the committee's pre-hearing questions (SO 182(3)). Research director to distribute answers to committee on receipt.
Friday 21 August 8.30am-8.45am	Committee's pre-hearing meeting in Room A35, Parliament House
Friday 21 August 9.00am –8.15pm	Public hearing in the Legislative Council Chamber (SO 178).
Wednesday 26 August 10.00am	Deadline for Ministers Byrne and Miles to provide the research director their answers to questions taken on notice at the hearing (SO 183(3)).
Wednesday 2 September 5.00pm	Deadline for the research director to send draft report to the chair.
Friday 4 September 5.00pm	Deadline for the research director to forward the draft report to the committee.
Monday 7 September 10.00am	Committee meeting to consider the draft report (teleconference facility available).
Tuesday 8 September Approx. 10.00am	Deadline for the committee to provide the research director with any statements of reservations or dissenting reports (within 24 hrs after report adopted) (SO 187(3)).
Tuesday 8 September 5.00pm	Report and volume of additional information** tabled with the Clerk (SO189 & 217). The Motion agreed by the House on 4 June 2015 sets a reporting deadline for all committees of Friday 11 September 2015.

Agreed

3. Hearing program for the consideration of portfolio budget estimates 2015

Moved Mr Bennett seconded Mrs Gilbert:

That the draft hearing program with times allocated to portfolio service areas be agreed to:

Time ¹	Portfolio	Details
9.00 – 10.30am	Agriculture, Fisheries, Sport and Racing	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
10.30 – 11.00am	Break	
11.00am– 12.30pm	Agriculture, Fisheries, Sport and Racing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Agricultural College Corporation • QRAA
12.30 – 1.30pm	Lunch	
1.30 – 3.00pm	Agriculture, Fisheries, Sport and Racing	Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing (Sport and Racing) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stadiums Queensland • Racing Queensland
3.00 – 3.30pm	Break	
3.00 – 4.30pm	Environment, Heritage Protection, National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef	Office of the Great Barrier Reef
4.30 – 4.45pm	Break	
4.45-6.15pm	Environment, Heritage Protection, National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef	Department of Environment and Heritage Protection
6.15- 6.45pm	Break	
6.45 – 8.15pm	Environment, Heritage Protection, National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef	National Parks

Agreed

4. Times for Ministers' opening statements

Moved Mr Bennett seconded Mr Power:

That Ministers may make opening statements for up to five minutes, and may apportion this time across the time blocks for the examination of their portfolio service areas if they wish.

Agreed

5. Requests for leave to participate in the committee's estimates hearing on 21 August 2015

Mr Bennett informed the committee that Opposition Members: Mrs Deborah Frecklington MP, Member for Nanango; Mrs Jan Stuckey MP, Member for Currumbin; and Mr Andrew Powell MP, Member for Glass House; seek leave to participate in the estimates hearing.

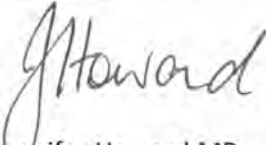
¹SO 178 provides that portfolio committees may only hold hearings and take evidence on the dates allocated by order of the House at times agreed to by the committee between 9.00am and 9.30pm.

6. **Next meeting** **Friday 21 August 2015**

7. **Close**

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 9.05am

Certified correct this 7th day of September 2015

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Howard', written in a cursive style.

Jennifer Howard MP
Chair

MINUTES



Agriculture and Environment Committee

Meeting No. E2

Tuesday 18 August 2015, at 1.53pm

Room 504A, Level 5, Parliamentary Annexe

- 1. Members Present:**
- Ms Jennifer Howard, Chair, Member for Ipswich
 - Mr Stephen Bennett, Member for Burnett
 - Mrs Julianne Gilbert, Member for Mackay
 - Mr Linus Power, Member for Logan
 - Mr Edward Sorensen, Member for Hervey Bay
 - Mr Robert Katter, Member for Mount Isa

Apologies: Nil

In attendance: Rob Hansen, Research Director
Megan Johns, Principal Research Officer

2. Hearing program for the consideration of portfolio budget estimates 2015

The committee considered a request from Mr Bennett to amend the hearing program to increase the time for questions for DAF in the first time block by 30 minutes, and to reduce the second time block for questions about the Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges and QRAA by 30 minutes, and that questions in this time block for DAF also be permitted.

Moved Mr Bennett seconded Mr Power:

That the following revised hearing program be agreed to:

Time	Portfolio	Details
9.00 – 10.45am	Agriculture, Fisheries, Sport and Racing	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
10.45 – 11.15am	Break	
11.15am – 12.00noon	Agriculture, Fisheries, Sport and Racing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Agriculture and Fisheries • Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges • QRAA
12.00 – 1.00pm	Lunch	
1.00 – 2.15pm	Agriculture, Fisheries, Sport and Racing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing (Sport and Racing) • Stadiums Queensland • Racing Queensland
2.15 – 2.45pm	Break	
2.45 – 4.00pm	Environment, Heritage Protection, National Parks & the Great Barrier Reef	Office of the Great Barrier Reef
4.00 – 4.15pm	Break	
4.15-5.30pm	Environment, Heritage Protection, National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef	Department of Environment and Heritage Protection
5.30- 6.00pm	Break	
6.00 – 7.15pm	Environment, Heritage Protection, National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef	National Parks

Agreed

3. **Next meeting** **Friday 21 August 2015**

4. **Close**

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 2.07pm

Certified correct this 7th day of September 2015


Jennifer Howard MP
Chair



Agriculture and Environment Committee

Meeting No.E3

Friday 21 August 2015, at 8.31am

Room A35, Parliament House

1. **Members Present:** Ms Jennifer Howard, Chair, Member for Ipswich
Mr Stephen Bennett, Member for Burnett
Mrs Julianne Gilbert, Member for Mackay
Mr Linus Power, Member for Logan
Mr Edward Sorensen, Member for Hervey Bay

Apologies: Mr Robert Katter, Member for Mount Isa

In attendance: Rob Hansen, Research Director
Megan Johns, Principal Research Officer

2. **Requests for leave to participate in the committee's public hearing**

Moved Mr Barnett seconded Mrs Gilbert:

That the request for leave for the following non-committee members to participate in the hearing for estimates be agreed to:

- *Lawrence Springborg, the Member for Southern Downs and Leader of the Opposition*
- *John-Paul Langbroek, the Member for Surfers Paradise and Deputy Leader of the Opposition*
- *Jeff Seeney, the Member for Callide*
- *Andrew Powell, the Member for Glass House*
- *Jann Stuckey, the Member for Currumbin, and*
- *Deb Frecklington, the Member for Nanango.*

Agreed

3. **Publication of answers to questions on notice**

The committee noted that Ministers' answers to the committee's questions on notice would be published at the commencement of the hearing in accordance with SO 182(8).

4. **General hearing procedures**

The research director reminded members of the following procedural issues for estimates hearings:

- SO 181(g) provides members broad latitude to ask questions relevant to the examination of the Appropriations being considered by the committee to determine whether the proposed expenditure should be agreed to
- SO 180(2) provides that, for statutory authorities, a member may ask any question which the committee determines will assist it in its examination of the Appropriation Bill or otherwise to determine whether public funds are being efficiently spent or appropriate guarantees are being provided

- In accordance with SO 181, committee members and visiting members may only directly question Ministers, Directors-General and the following CEOs of entities listed in Schedule 7 of the Standing Orders:
 - Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges (Mr Brent Kinnane, Principal Executive Officer)
 - QRAA (Mr Cameron Macmillan, CEO)
 - Stadiums Queensland (Mr Kevin Yearbury, CEO), and
 - Racing Queensland (Mr Ian Hall, Acting CEO)
- As with all committee hearings, the Chair presides over the estimates hearings and is the arbiter for all procedural matters in the same way that the Speaker presides over sittings of the House. The correct process for a member wishing to challenge a ruling of the Chair is to request the Chair to adjourn the hearing so the committee may deliberate in private on the Chair's ruling.
- Members cannot move substantive motions during public hearings. The correct process is to adjourn the hearing and deliberate in private.
- Room A35 has been set aside for the committee's exclusive private use during the hearing to meet to resolve procedural matters and for breaks
- All breaks will be catered during the estimates hearing except the lunch break from 12.00noon-1.00pm.

5. General business

The committee noted that staff of the Parliamentary Education and Communications Secretariat may attend the hearing to take photographs for future parliamentary education publications.

6. **Next meeting for estimates business Monday 7 September 2015**

7. **Close**

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 8.55am

Certified correct this 7th day of September 2015


 Jennifer Howard MP
 Chair

MINUTES



Agriculture and Environment Committee

Meeting No. E4

Friday 21 August 2015, at 10.55am

Room A35, Parliament House

1. **Members Present:** Ms Jennifer Howard, Chair, Member for Ipswich
Mr Stephen Bennett, Member for Burnett
Mrs Julianne Gilbert, Member for Mackay
Mr Linus Power, Member for Logan
Mr Edward Sorensen, Member for Hervey Bay

Apologies: Mr Robert Katter, Member for Mount Isa

In attendance: Rob Hansen, Research Director
Megan Johns, Principal Research Officer

2. **Requests for leave to table a document**

Moved Ms Howard seconded Mr Power:

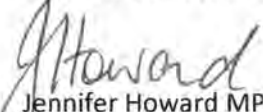
That the request for leave from Minister Byrne to table a media release titled 'Federal Government does not support net-fishing bans' issued by Senator Matthew Canavan, dated 3 July 2015.

Agreed

3. **Close**

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 11.05am

Certified correct this 7th day of September 2015


Jennifer Howard MP
Chair

MINUTES



Agriculture and Environment Committee

Meeting No.E5

Monday 7 September 2015, at 10.02am
Room 504, Level 5, Parliamentary Annexe

1. **Members Present:** Ms Jennifer Howard, Chair, Member for Ipswich
Mr Stephen Bennett, Member for Burnett
Mr Linus Power, Member for Logan
Mr Robert Katter, Member for Mount Isa
Mr Edward Sorensen, Member for Hervey Bay

Apologies: Mrs Julianne Gilbert, Member for Mackay

In attendance: Rob Hansen, Research Director
Megan Johns, Principal Research Officer

2. **Minutes of estimates meetings**

Moved Mr Bennett seconded Mr Katter:

That the minutes of the following meetings for estimates be agreed to:

- E2 held on 18 August
- E3 held on 21 August (pre-hearing meeting), and
- E4 held in the break on 21 August

Agreed

3. **Consideration of the Chair's draft report No.5**

Moved Mr Bennett seconded Mr Power:

That the committee adopts the Chair's report No.5 on portfolio estimates for 2015-16 as its report, and authorises that the report be tabled in conjunction with a volume of additional information on Tuesday 8 September 2015.

Agreed

4. **Dissenting reports/statements of reservations**

Moved Mr Bennett seconded Mr Power:

That the committee notes that any statements of reservations or dissenting reports are to be provided to the research director within 24 hrs of the report being adopted in accordance with SO 187(3).

Agreed

5. Volume of additional information

Moved Mr Sorensen seconded Mr Katter:

That the following information be included in the volume of additional information to be tabled together with the committee's report:

- *Minutes of the committee's private meetings E1, E2, E3, E4 and E5 in connection with its consideration of portfolio budget estimates*
- *Ministers' answers to the committee's pre-hearing questions and questions taken on notice at the public hearing on 21 August*
- *Minister Byrne's letter to the committee dated 31 August clarifying his comments at the hearing, and*
- *Documents tabled during the hearing.*

Agreed

6. Corrections to the hearing transcript

Moved Mr Power seconded Mr Katter:


That the transcript be finalised by amending the draft to incorporate the corrections provided on behalf of Ministers Miles and Byrne on 31 August 2015.

Agreed

7. Close

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 10.07am.

Certified correct this 7th day of September 2015.


Rob Hansen
Research Director

*Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries
and Minister for Sport and Racing*

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Answers to Questions on Notice

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 1

Asked on 29 July 2015

Question asked of the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing (HON W BYRNE)—

QUESTION:

Has the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries had international experts examine and comment on Biosecurity Queensland's response to Panama Tropical Race 4?

ANSWER:

I thank the Committee for the Question.

As part of the comprehensive response to the detection of Panama Tropical Race 4 in Northern Queensland, the Department has both consulted with international experts and brought them to Australia to advise on the response.

South African-based Professor Altus Viljoen and Dr Chi Ping Chao, Director, Banana Research Institute of Taiwan visited Queensland in June 2015 when also in Australia for the Australian Banana Industry Congress in Melbourne.

Professor Viljoen is a world renowned expert on banana disease control and resistant varieties, specialising in Panama disease tropical race 4.

Dr Chao is best known for his work to develop diagnostic techniques for Panama disease tropical race 4 and the development of disease tolerant varieties.

I met with both experts following their visit to the affected properties in north Queensland and the State Coordination Centre and diagnostics laboratory in Brisbane.

During our meeting I asked them for their independent view on the Queensland Government's response to the disease incursion. Both experts were highly complementary of the actions taken in Queensland and of the Department particularly the speed in which response activities had been actioned.

Professor Viljoen commented that he believes the state had responded to the disease faster and in a more comprehensive manner than anywhere else in the world.

Dr Chao said he was confident that the location of the disease, containment actions and biosecurity measures in place will put the industry in good stead to successfully manage the incursion and the impact of the disease.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 2

Asked on 29 July 2015

Question asked of the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing (HON W BYRNE)—

QUESTION:

Has there been an effective eradication of fire ants in Queensland? If so, how was this program funded?

ANSWER:

I thank the Committee for the Question.

Fire Ants remain a major focus for the government. Two separate responses are currently underway. One is in South-east Queensland and one at Yarwun, near Gladstone.

In relation to the Yarwun infestation, an important milestone in the effort to eradicate the incursion, detected in 2013, has been reached. Recently, extensive surveillance was undertaken across the entire fire ant restricted area in Yarwun, Targinie and Curtis Island in July 2015 and there was no evidence of fire ants found. In effect, the incursion has been effectively eradicated.

The recent surveillance follows six rounds of treatment and two previous rounds of surveillance undertaken by the national program since fire ants were confirmed in December 2013 at Yarwun. Visual surveillance was undertaken using field teams while highly trained odour detection dogs conducted surveillance of all suitable fire ant habitat.

It is anticipated that after the second round of verification surveillance scheduled in June 2016, Gladstone can again be formally declared free from fire ants. Genetic analysis has shown that the Yarwun (2013) population of fire ants was not genetically linked to the previous incursion in Yarwun in 2006 and most likely originated from the southern USA, establishing approximately two to three years prior to detection. The 2006 incursion was deemed eradicated in 2010.

The eradication of the 2006 incursion and the outstanding results of the latest round of surveillance have demonstrated the success of national cost-share arrangements in eradicating fire ants.

Queensland has implemented the National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program in Yarwun on behalf of national cost-sharing partners following the two incursions of fire ants in Yarwun, in 2006 and most recently in 2013. The Yarwun (2013) incursion has been funded through cost-sharing apportionments calculated in accordance with the cost-sharing formulas as identified in the National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement.

Queensland is also implementing the eradication program in South East Queensland on behalf of the national cost-sharing partners which is ongoing.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 3

Asked on 29 July 2015

Question asked of the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing (HON W BYRNE)—

QUESTION:

What actions has the Government taken to assist producers who use the DRAS scheme?

ANSWER:

I thank the Committee for the Question.

The Queensland Government has provided over \$52 million in Drought Relief Assistance Scheme (DRAS) assistance to drought affected primary producers across Queensland since the commencement of the current drought from 1 April 2013 to 30 June 2015. Over \$20 million has been expended in freight subsidies and a further \$32 million in Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebates (EWIR). A top up of \$13 million to the EWIR was provided by the Australian Government (ending February 2015).

Value of DRAS claims as at 30 June 2015						
Claim Type	2013-14		2014-15		Drought Assistance Total	
	\$m	claims	\$m	claims	\$m	claims
Total Freight Subsidies	\$ 9.833	3158	\$ 10.205	3808	\$ 20.038	6966
EWIR (State)	\$ 14.135	1852	\$ 18.025	2180	\$ 32.160	4032
Total DRAS (State)	\$ 23.968	5010	\$ 28.230	5988	\$ 52.198	10998
Australian Government Top Up to EWIR	\$ 6.211	1407	\$ 6.840	1594	\$ 13.051	3001
Total State and Federal	\$ 30.179		\$ 35.070		\$ 65.249	

Consistent with its election commitments to continue existing drought assistance programs and develop measures to help producers improve their climate risk management and drought preparedness strategies in the longer term, the Queensland Government has continued funding for DRAS with \$32.925 million allocated in 2015-16. This funding includes \$425,000 to develop measures for improved resilience and preparedness programs. The Queensland Government has also increased the maximum DRAS annual limit for those entering their third and subsequent year of drought. With an approved Drought Management Plan, the cap lifts from \$30,000 to \$40,000 per financial year.

With most of western and central Queensland now in the third year of being drought declared this announcement will provide additional financial support to producers in the areas most in need of assistance.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 4

Asked on 29 July 2015

Question asked of the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing (HON W BYRNE)—

QUESTION:

How many charities were assisted with fodder subsidies and to what amount?

ANSWER:

I thank the Committee for the Question.

Under the Drought Relief Assistance Scheme, registered charities providing fodder to droughted producers can receive freight subsidies of up to 100 per cent. The annual limit is \$30,000 in subsidies, although this amount may be increased on a case by case basis by the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing.

Six individual charities have received freight assistance under the Drought Relief Assistance Scheme since the commencement of the current drought on 1 April 2013. The total amount paid to these charities was \$453,959.32.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 5

Asked on 29 July 2015

Question asked of the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing (HON W BYRNE)—

QUESTION:

Has the Minister visited DAF offices in regional Queensland?

ANSWER:

I thank the Committee for the Question.

Since commencing as Minister earlier this year I have made it a priority to network with staff, both in Brisbane and across the state. To date, I have visited a number of DAF offices in regional Queensland.

In February 2015 I visited the Biloela office for a briefing on the impacts of Severe Tropical Cyclone Marcia and to thank staff for their rapid assessment of the impacts in the Banana, Gladstone and North Burnett local government areas. I also visited impacted producers in the grains, cotton, dairy and horticultural sector.

In early March 2015 I visited the Longreach office, taking time to meet staff and get first hand feedback on the impacts of drought in the region. In late March I toured the Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol depot in Townsville as well as visiting the Townsville office where I held an informal meeting with staff. This provided an opportunity for staff to raise issues, for me to respond to queries and give an overview of the direction of the new Government.

Throughout March I also undertook a number of visits to North Queensland following the suspected identification of Panama Tropical Race 4 (TR4) on a banana plantation near Tully. I accompanied the Premier on a visit to Tully where Panama TR4 was discussed with biosecurity staff. I also visited Ingham, Innisfail and Mareeba to discuss with staff and stakeholders the potential impacts of TR4 on banana growers.

In April 2015 I met with departmental staff based at Dalby where we discussed the importance of the work being done in the area.

In early May I visited Rockhampton and met staff in support of Beef 2015, an international beef event bringing together all sectors of the beef industry and promoting Australian beef to a global audience. In mid May 2015 I inspected the Longreach office, meeting with staff and viewing the accommodation being used for the co-location of government staff at the site.

In June 2015 I visited the Parkhurst office, meeting with staff and hearing about the important work being undertaken in the area, as well as discussing the department's priorities into the future.

In August 2015 I visited the Torres Strait to progress fisheries arrangements in the Torres Strait Protected Zone which is jointly managed between the Australian Government through the Australian Fisheries Management Authority, the Torres Strait Regional Authority and the Queensland State Government through Fisheries Queensland.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 6

Asked on 29 July 2015

Question asked of the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing (HON W BYRNE)—

QUESTION:

What is the Government investing in regional areas to support drought impacted farmers?

ANSWER:

I thank the Committee for the Question.

Currently, 80.35 per cent of the state is drought declared. The Queensland Government gave an election commitment to continue existing drought arrangements until 2018 and to review existing arrangements should the wet season fail. This commitment means that regional drought declared areas of western and central Queensland are benefiting from a \$52.1 million drought package over four years from 2015-16.

This package is delivered by a number of agencies but principally includes the following programs:

- Drought Relief Assistance Scheme (DRAS) administered by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (\$32.9 million in 2015-16 and \$7.1 million over the following three years). DRAS provides freight subsidies for moving fodder and water during drought and a rebate on the purchase of emergency water infrastructure, additional funding for the Rural Financial Counselling Service and drought reform;
- a waiver of annual water licence fees and a general rebate of land rent for producers in drought declared areas administered by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines (\$4.1 million);
- social and community support to assist community wellbeing administered by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (\$4 million);
- relief on electricity charges for agricultural water supply administered by Ergon and the Department of Energy and Water Supply (\$2.5 million); and
- primary mental health support through the Royal Flying Doctor Service administered by Queensland Health (\$1.5 million).

As a result of the commitment to review drought assistance at the end of the wet season, the Queensland Government announced an increase to the maximum DRAS annual limit for those entering their third and subsequent year of drought. With an approved Drought Management Plan, the cap lifts from \$30,000 to \$40,000 per financial year.

With most of western and central Queensland now in the third year of being drought declared this announcement will provide additional financial support to producers in the areas most in need of assistance.

On top of the \$52.1 million drought package the Queensland Government is providing a further \$5 million over three years to support wild dog, feral cat and pest management in drought declared areas.

The Queensland Government has also contributed an additional \$250,000 to supporting students enrolled in the Schools of Distance Education.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 7

Asked on 29 July 2015

Question asked of the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing (HON W BYRNE)—

QUESTION:

Have there been any funds announced for Get in the Game programs without a budgetary allocation that the Minister is aware of? What is the status of these announcements?

ANSWER:

I thank the Committee for the Question.

No, all funding that has been allocated to the Get in the Game initiative has been allocated in the forward estimates.

Following an independent evaluation of three of the Get in the Game programs, I announced a commitment of more than \$80 million over three years on 5 July 2015. With this announcement, dates for the programs opening over the next three years were also released, which will assist local councils and sport and recreation organisations to plan and collaborate more effectively with the Queensland Government, and prioritise the most needed projects in the community.

Comprising four funding programs — *Get Started Vouchers*, *Get Going Clubs*, *Get Playing Places and Spaces* and *Get Playing Plus* — the Get in the Game initiative is designed to get more people, especially children and young people, playing grassroots sport and involved in recreational activities.

Round 6 of the *Get Started Vouchers* program opened on 15 July 2015. Vouchers for this round were allocated by 10 August 2015 with more than 11,500 vouchers issued, when the budget was fully allocated. Clubs can redeem these vouchers until 30 October 2015. This program is a great support mechanism to help children and young people join a club, particularly those families who have the least amount of disposable income.

Rounds 4 of the *Get Going Clubs* and the *Get Playing Places and Spaces* programs opened for applications on 3 August 2015, and will close on 2 October 2015, with projects to be delivered in 2016. The *Get Going Clubs* program provides support for not-for-profit local sport and recreation organisations to create and provide access to participation opportunities for Queenslanders. The *Get Playing Places and Spaces* program assists local sport and recreation organisations with the development of places and spaces so Queenslanders are encouraged to become involved in sport and active recreation.

Round 2 of the *Get Playing Plus* program, which provides funding up to \$1.5 million for larger infrastructure projects will open for registrations of interest on 1 September 2015, with funded projects to be delivered from 1 July 2016. This program assists in developing places and spaces that increase participation opportunities, meet service gaps and address regional needs.

Information about each of the Get in the Game programs is available on the Queensland Government website at <https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/sports/funding/>.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 8

Asked on 29 July 2015

Question asked of the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing (HON W BYRNE)—

QUESTION:

Has there been any investment in women's and girls' sport participation programs? If so, how much and how does this compare to previous investments?

ANSWER:

I thank the Committee for the Question.

The Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing is committed to getting women and girls active for life under its *Start Playing Stay Playing* strategy. The department has committed over \$2.5 million in funding across grant funding programs dedicated to providing opportunities for women and girls to participate in a range of physical activities across Queensland.

This includes \$1.806 million under the *Get Out Get Active* program which provides funding to local governments to deliver local sport and recreation opportunities for women and girls. Round 1 of the program supported 19 local governments to deliver tailored programs for women to a total of \$306,000. The Round 2 budget was increased to \$500,000 as part of a \$1.5 million three-year commitment to the program. Round 2 project proposals closed on 20 August 2015 with funding anticipated to be announced in October 2015.

Under the *Queensland Sport and Recreation Industry Development Program 2014-2016*, 11 organisations have been supported \$740,000 across three years to deliver a range of programs across the State for the following activities, athletics, rugby league, tennis, cricket, baseball, gymnastics, golf, Australian football league, surfing, softball and bicycle motocross.

In addition the department is progressing a range of other initiatives through its operational budget, including the development of a dedicated web presence, production of a promotional video and facilitating mentoring and networking opportunities for women and girls.

These commitments surpass previous investments, where the department did not dedicate funding to women and girls.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 9

Asked on 29 July 2015

Question asked of the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing (HON W BYRNE)—

QUESTION:

Has there been any changes or investments made to the YATS program?

ANSWER:

I thank the Committee for the Question.

On 1 July 2015, the Queensland Government released a new program to support Queensland's young athletes and officials, recognising that athletes who excel in their chosen sport are often the ones who bear the greatest costs to attend championship events.

The Young Athletes Travel Subsidy (YATS) replaces the Young Athlete Assistance Program (YAAP) and builds on its success by providing increased funding amounts for applicants under the age of 18, travelling a distance greater than 250 kilometres (one-way) to attend state, national and international events.

Under the YATS, athletes and officials are now able to apply for financial assistance to attend one eligible state, national and international event, every two calendar years. Previously, athletes only received funding of \$200 for any event once every two years.

The funding amounts and tiers are as follows:

- \$200 for state level championships;
- \$400 for national level championships; and
- \$600 for international championships.

Up to a maximum of \$1,200 is available to an applicant involved in all three tiers of competition. In comparison, the previous program provided just \$200 within a two-year period.

This is particularly important as young athletes and officials prepare in the lead up to the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games.

We look forward to seeing the difference that this funding will make.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 10

Asked on 29 July 2015

Question asked of the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing (HON W BYRNE)—

QUESTION:

Has there been any change to the Stadiums Queensland board membership? If so, what changes were made, how were they made and how does this fit with the Government's commitment to female participation on government boards?

ANSWER:

I thank the Committee for the Question.

In March 2015, the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing advised that appointments to the Stadiums Queensland Board were due to expire on 30 June 2015 and listed a number of options to fill the impending vacancies.

After considering the options, I directed the department to begin the process to refresh the Board giving due consideration to ensuring continuity going forward.

The department procured the services of Eden Ritchie Recruitment to undertake a recruitment process which attracted in excess of 230 applications.

As a result of this process six nominees were selected including two current Board members Ms Sophie Devitt and Ms Victoria Bryant (Carthew).

On 1 July 2015 the Governor in Council approved the appointment of Ms Sophie Devitt (chairperson and director), Ms Victoria Bryant (Carthew), Ms Samantha Carroll, Mr Michael Cottier, Ms Sandra Deane and Mr Christopher Johnson.

This is the first time that a majority of the Board has been female and this is the first time that a woman has chaired the Board. This increase in female representation is in line with the Palaszczuk Government's target of 50 percent female participation on Queensland boards.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 1

Asked on 29 July 2015

Question asked of the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing (HON W BYRNE)—

QUESTION:

Can the Minister provide a detailed breakdown of funding that has been allocated to any reviews, inquiries, taskforces or committees established by his department after the 2015 general election for the establishment of the rural jobs agency trial?

ANSWER:

I thank the Committee for the Question.

To date there has been no allocation of funding to reviews, inquiries, taskforces or committees to explore the concept of a rural job agency.

Officers of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries have consulted with peak industry bodies on the matter of a rural job agency trial and have received advice on the preferred way forward. This is supported by the Queensland Farmers' Federation, AgForce, Growcom and CANEGROWERS.

These peak organisations have indicated their collective support for the establishment of the Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance to lead the development of practical solutions to workforce issues that affect rural employers.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 2

Asked on 29 July 2015

Question asked of the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing (HON W BYRNE)—

QUESTION:

Can the Minister provide a detailed breakdown of funding that has allocated to any reviews, inquiries, taskforces or committees established by his department after the 2015 general election for the establishment of a new animal welfare advisory board?

ANSWER:

I thank the Committee for the Question.

The Government made an election commitment to establish a new animal welfare advisory board comprising technical, community and industry representatives to advise the Minister on animal welfare issues including issues associated with the development and promotion of codes of practices for the humane treatment of animals - on farm, in transport and at the point of slaughter.

The Terms of Reference for the Animal Welfare Advisory Board have now been approved and I expect to announce the newly appointed board members in the near future.

No funding has been allocated to any review or inquiry or towards any taskforce or committee for the establishment of a new animal welfare advisory board.

As at 31 July 2015 funding of \$10,000 has been allocated in the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries Biosecurity Queensland budget to cover the expenses of new board members attending meetings.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 3

Asked on 29 July 2015

Question asked of the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing (HON W BYRNE)—

QUESTION:

Can the Minister provide a detailed breakdown of funding that has been allocated to any reviews, inquiries, taskforces or committees established by his department after the 2015 general election for in regards to the review occurring into agriculture and research development?

ANSWER:

I thank the Committee for the Question.

In 2015-16, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries has allocated \$150,000 over two years for the development of a 10 year Agriculture and Food Research, Development and Extension (RD&E) Blueprint.

The Blueprint will complement the Advance Queensland Innovation Challenges Program and will ensure our food and fibre industries remain competitive by looking at emerging opportunities and seeking new and imaginative ways to attract investment in RD&E.

Planning has commenced on an RD&E Blueprint Discussion Paper which will be released for stakeholder input on a range of issues including challenges and opportunities over the next decade, RD&E priorities and options for improving partnerships and alliances.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 4

Asked on 29 July 2015

Question asked of the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing (HON W BYRNE)—

QUESTION:

Given the Minister has announced \$10 million to be invested in the response to Panama Disease Tropical Race 4, could he advise the breakdown of funding for biosecurity responses for Red Imported Fire Ant, Cucumber Green Mottle Mosaic Virus, Electric Ant and Red Witchweed?

ANSWER:

I thank the Committee for the Question.

Red Imported Fire Ants in South East Queensland - the response plan requires a total budget of \$18.5 million for 2015-16. Queensland is underwriting the costs of the program until the outcomes of an independent review are known. It is expected that after national funding is approved, Queensland's share will be \$4.4527 million.

Red Imported Fire Ants in Yarwun - the total national cost shared budget is \$1.6 million, with Queensland's share being \$164,197.

Electric Ant - subject to final AGMIN approval, the total national cost shared budget is \$1.045 million, with Queensland's share being \$131,364.

Red Witchweed - subject to final AGMIN and industry approval, the total national cost shared budget for 2015-16 is \$1.367 million, with Queensland's share being \$150,145.

Cucumber Green Mottle Mosaic Virus (CGMMV) - the response to this pest is not a national cost shared response, as the National Management Group was unable to reach a consensus on whether it relates to an Emergency Plant Pest under the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed or if it was technically feasible to eradicate in Queensland. Queensland is working with the grower to manage the infected property so that CGMMV is eradicated from Queensland, and with industry to develop a plan based on the national management strategy for CGMMV. The response will continue to be funded from the core biosecurity budget. The total cost for 2015-16 will be known once the plan is finalised.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 5

Asked on 29 July 2015

Question asked of the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing (HON W BYRNE)—

QUESTION:

With reference to Panama Disease Tropical Race 4 as noted on Page 6 of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries SDS, could the Minister advise how soon after the discovery of Panama Disease Tropical Race 4 did the Minister attend the site, and how many further times he has met with, visited or communicated with the affected growers and banana industry on this issue?

ANSWER:

I thank the Committee for the Question.

On 3 March 2015, molecular diagnostic (PCR) testing conducted on a sample taken from a banana plant on a property in the Tully Valley (1-IP), confirmed the detection of Panama disease tropical race 4.

On 4 March 2015, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries served a quarantine Direction on the affected property (1-IP) restricting movement of risk items from the property. The property linked by family ownership (2-SP) was also quarantined as a precaution, due to the sharing of machinery and equipment between the affiliated farms.

On 11 March 2015, the Premier and I travelled to Tully in north Queensland and attended meetings with the affected property owners, representatives of the Australian Banana Growers' Council (ABGC) and the community to gain a better understanding of the concerns of the affected growers and the industry.

Following this visit, the Government gave a commitment to establish a joint government and industry Taskforce to focus on the potential economic, social and community impacts on the banana industry and the flow on effects to the community. A Community Support Action Team was immediately mobilised to work alongside the biosecurity staff already in the region. The work of the Taskforce and the Community Support Action Team is ongoing.

On 28 March 2015, I again attended the banana growing districts of Tully, Innisfail and Mareeba where I was engaged in a number of banana industry meetings and ABGC hosted forums.

On 25 June 2015, I met with South African-based Professor Altus Viljoen and Dr Chi Ping Chao, Director Banana Research Institute of Taiwan when they visited Queensland whilst in Australia for the Australian Banana Industry Congress held in Melbourne. I met with both experts following their visit to the affected properties in

north Queensland and the State Coordination Centre and diagnostics laboratory in Brisbane.

Since 3 March 2015 I have released seven Ministerial Media Statements providing information regarding the ongoing support the Queensland Government is providing to the affected growers and the industry.

I have been active in correspondence and communication with my Parliamentary and Ministerial colleagues, Australian Government Ministers and associated Parliamentary Secretaries and the banana industry, both seeking their ongoing support to work collaboratively to provide a coordinated response to this nationally significant biosecurity incident and also to respond to enquiries made relevant to the responsibilities of my Ministerial portfolio.

From the time of the declaration of the Emergency Response on 4 March 2015, commencing with the establishment of the State Coordination Centre in Brisbane and the Local Control Centre in north Queensland, I have been a frequent visitor to the State Coordination Centre where I have received regular briefings on the progress of response actions.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 6

Asked on 29 July 2015

Question asked of the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing (HON W BYRNE)—

QUESTION:

Minister I refer to the public servant numbers detailed in the portfolio SDS, and ask since the assent of the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 can the Minister advise how many public servants within the Department's staffing allocation have had their details supplied to unions under the Government's Union Encouragement Policy - listed in the following format for each portfolio in the Departments of Agriculture and Fisheries and Sport and Racing.

Department	Union Name	Number of Employee details forwarded

ANSWER:

I thank the Committee for the question.

The Palaszczuk Government made a commitment to restore fairness for government workers.

Union encouragement was one of the many conditions of employment rendered unenforceable during the former government's term. I am proud to defend the right of every worker to join, or not to join, their union.

The *Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2015* (the Act) is one of the ways the Palaszczuk Government is delivering on its commitments. From June 2015, the Act restores the ability for union members to organise and protect workers' employment conditions, including re-enlivening any provisions within industrial instruments requiring new employee details to be passed onto relevant unions.

These amendments were important because the former government went further than any Queensland government in history in attacking workers' rights.

The union encouragement policy released in May 2015 provides for new employees to have ready access to a union representative so that they can make an informed decision about whether or not to join a union. The policy operates subject to relevant legislation.

The manner regarding release and reporting of new employee details will vary depending on the industrial instrument. The Government will be consolidating the number of new employee details provided to unions across the public sector on a

quarterly basis. Quarterly reporting is in line with a number of public sector certified agreements such as the State Government Department Certified Agreement (the Core Agreement) which covers nearly 50,000 public servants. From June 2015 the re-enlivened provisions provides that information about new starters is to be provided to relevant unions on a quarterly basis. While some agencies may have released new employee details to unions, the first full quarterly report (the September quarter report) consolidating the number of new employee details provided to unions across the public sector will be available in October 2015.

All public servants are protected by privacy laws and agencies are responsible for complying with those laws. Each agency is required to comply with their relevant industrial instrument(s) regarding union encouragement, including reporting timeframes.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 7

Asked on 29 July 2015

Question asked of the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing (HON W BYRNE)—

QUESTION:

I refer to page 7 of the SDS regarding the integrity of the Queensland racing industry and the Minister's statement to the House on 16 July: -

"Despite in-house efficiencies of approximately \$6 million already being made for 2015-16, the expected losses for this financial year at Racing Queensland are now forecast to be in the order of \$28 million" and I ask: Will the Minister provide:

- a) a detailed breakdown and explanation of the total expected loss of \$34 million;
- b) a detailed breakdown and explanation of the announced savings of \$6 million, including whether these measures shall be continued over the 2015-16 financial year?

ANSWER:

I thank the Committee for the Question.

The predicted deficit of \$34 million (\$28 million less the \$6 million savings) can be largely attributed to the unrealistic expectations of the amount of wagering revenue; over-generous allocation of funds to prize money; expansion of the Racing Queensland workforce; increased club subsidies; and lack of full consideration of the contested market for betting revenue.

Revenue	\$'m
• Wagering Revenue	166.8
• Racing Fees	9.5
• Breeding Program Revenue	1.7
• Other Revenue	3.2
Total Revenue	181.2
Expenditure	
• Prize money and Breeding (net of Animal Welfare Levies)	138.6
• Clubs Subsidies and other Club Expenditure	16.8
• RQ Costs, Race Day Costs, Stewarding and Integrity Costs	33.6
• Racing Science Centre	4.2
• Jockeys	13.3
• Harness Drivers Fees	0.9
• Depreciation	1.8
Total Expenditure	209.2
Profit/(Loss)	(28.0)

The breakdown of the announced savings of approximately \$6 million includes the following items:

- \$2.8 million due to reducing the planned expansion of RQ's workforce;
- \$1.7 million due to limiting RQ's contribution towards Club's capital works to essential items; and
- \$1.3 million due to reducing RQ's marketing expenditure from levels previously planned.

These savings all relate to the 2015-16 financial year.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING
NON-GOVERNMENT
QUESTION ON NOTICE**

No. 8

Asked on 29 July 2015

Question asked the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing (HON W BYRNE)—

QUESTION:

I refer to page 7 of the SDS (National Parks, Sport and Racing) in relation to public confidence in the Queensland racing industry and ask —

For the portfolios of sport and racing, will the Minister outline:

- a) the total number of assets owned by the portfolio's departments, agencies and associated entities above the value of \$10,000;
- b) a description of each asset owned above the value of \$10,000; and
- c) the value of each asset listed in (b) above?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the Question.

This Government made a commitment to restore accountability for racing in Queensland when it announced the Commission of Inquiry into the regulatory systems of the racing industry.

The Honourable Member should also know that all financial transactions involving public sector entities are annually and independently audited by the Queensland Audit Office (QAO) or independently qualified auditors. During the course of each of these audits, the auditors make an independent assessment of the financial management-related activities of public sector entities and where applicable the Auditor-General can provide reports directly to the Queensland Parliament on any matters arising.

I have been advised that it would not be practicable to identify and list all of the assets requested in the Member's question as the number of assets would total into the thousands. To do so would require a vast amount of work diverting officers and funding away from the provision of services to Queenslanders. If the Member has a specific question about specific assets at an entity then I would be more than happy to seek the information.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 9

Asked on 29 July 2015

Question asked of the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing (HON W BYRNE)—

QUESTION:

I refer to page 16 of the SDS (National Parks, Sport and Racing) in relation to expenditure across the forward estimates and ask –

Can the Minister provide a breakdown of grants provided under the Racing Industry Capital Development Scheme and Racing Infrastructure Fund, by year for 2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19, including the total amount of grants provided under these programs across the forward estimates (itemised by year)?

ANSWER:

I thank the Committee for the Question.

Total amount of grants provided under the Racing Industry Capital Development Scheme and Racing Infrastructure Fund are detailed below:

Program	2015-16 (\$)	2016-17 (\$)	2017-18 (\$)
Racing Industry Capital Development Scheme	14,558,000	0	0
Racing Infrastructure Fund	23,437,000	34,382,000	12,175,000
Total	37,995,000	34,382,000	12,175,000

Racing Infrastructure Fund

To date, one project has been approved for funding in 2015-16.

This project relates to the lending of \$12 million (GST exclusive) to the Brisbane Racing Club for infrastructure development at Eagle Farm racecourse involving the construction of vehicular and pedestrian tunnels, earthworks, ancillary drainage and associated infrastructure requirements.

Racing Industry Capital Development Scheme

Currently three projects are attached to the Racing Industry Capital Development Scheme (the Scheme). These will be wound down after the finalisation of these three projects with any residual balances of the Scheme being rolled over into the Racing Industry Fund.

Relevant details of the three projects are:

Program	Details	Budget 2015-16 (\$)
Eagle Farm Racecourse, Brisbane	Design, construct and complete upgrade works to the turf racing surface and inner training tracks.	1,452,200
Cluden Park Racecourse, Townsville	Upgrade of existing turf track, construction of a new maintenance facility building and installation of infield support.	2,833,200
Cronulla Park, Logan	Construction of stand-alone greyhound racing facility (project currently paused)	10,272,600
Total		14,558,000

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 10

Asked on 29 July 2015

Question asked of the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing (HON W BYRNE)—

QUESTION:

I refer to page 51 of Budget Measures in relation to the State Netball Centre and ask—

Can the Minister provide a detailed breakdown of the costs involved in the \$30M allocation to develop and build a state netball facility, including (a) the cost of construction, (b) the timeframes for completion of the project (c) the cost of the planning the project and any other costs associated with the implementation of this initiative, including the partnership with Netball Queensland and the Queensland Sport and Athletics Centre and their contribution?

ANSWER:

I thank the Committee for the Question.

- (a) The State Netball Centre is estimated to cost \$30 million and will be funded over two financial years, with \$15 million allocated in 2015/16 and \$15 million in 2016/17.
- (b) The State Netball Centre is expected to be completed in late 2017.
- (c) The cost of planning the project, including the cost of architects, engineers and other project consultants is estimated to be between \$2 million and \$3 million, subject to market conditions. The site for the construction of the State Netball Centre will be provided at the Queensland Sport and Athletics Centre which is owned by Stadiums Queensland. The operating costs for the ongoing operation and management of the Centre will be met by Netball Queensland.

*Answers to
Questions Taken on Notice*

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
ESTIMATES
QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE AT THE HEARING

No. 1

Asked on Friday, 21 August 2015

MS STUCKEY asked the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing (HON W BYRNE)—

QUESTION:

- (a) How much is spent on the security guards at Sovereign Lodge or any other facilities guarding seized or surrendered greyhounds?
- (b) How much is being spent on the care of greyhounds at these facilities? It is reported to be up to \$50 per dog per day. How long will this continue and what is this costing?
- (c) Why is there such a huge difference in price of care? I am told that it costs up to \$50 a dog per day, but \$11 a dog per day is considered to be the going rate?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the Question.

- (a) Seized and surrendered greyhounds are cared for at four locations. These locations are Golden View Kennels, Glory Bound Kennels, Maywyn Kennels and Sovereign Lodge.

The cost of caring for greyhounds at these facilities is incurred by Racing Queensland.

At 30 June 2015, the total cost of security guards since greyhounds were seized and taken into care was \$220,000. This cost is the total cost incurred for the four locations. The security guards were contracted to protect the greyhounds and to be present at kennel inspections in the weeks immediately following the airing of the Four Corners program on live-baiting in early 2015.

Security ceased at the facilities on 23 August 2015.

- (b) The standard cost of housing and feeding the greyhounds at these locations ranged between \$10.19 and \$11.00 per dog per day. The cost of greyhound pups at Golden View Kennels was \$8.80 per pup per day. This will continue in the short term while legal and associated issues are being resolved.

Additional costs were also incurred for supplements, veterinary care and whelping at the locations. Additional beds and bowls were also required at Sovereign Lodge (a Greyhound Adoption Program facility operated by Racing Queensland).

- (c) Specific greyhounds required veterinary care at different times throughout the process, including two breeding females which had litters at Golden View Kennels. These two greyhounds incurred whelping and rearing costs in addition to the daily rate.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
ESTIMATES
QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE AT THE HEARING
No. 2

Asked on Friday, 21 August 2015

MS STUCKEY asked the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing (HON W BYRNE)—

QUESTION:

How many Racing Queensland and departmental staff have had their positions terminated since this inquiry began and what were their positions?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the Question.

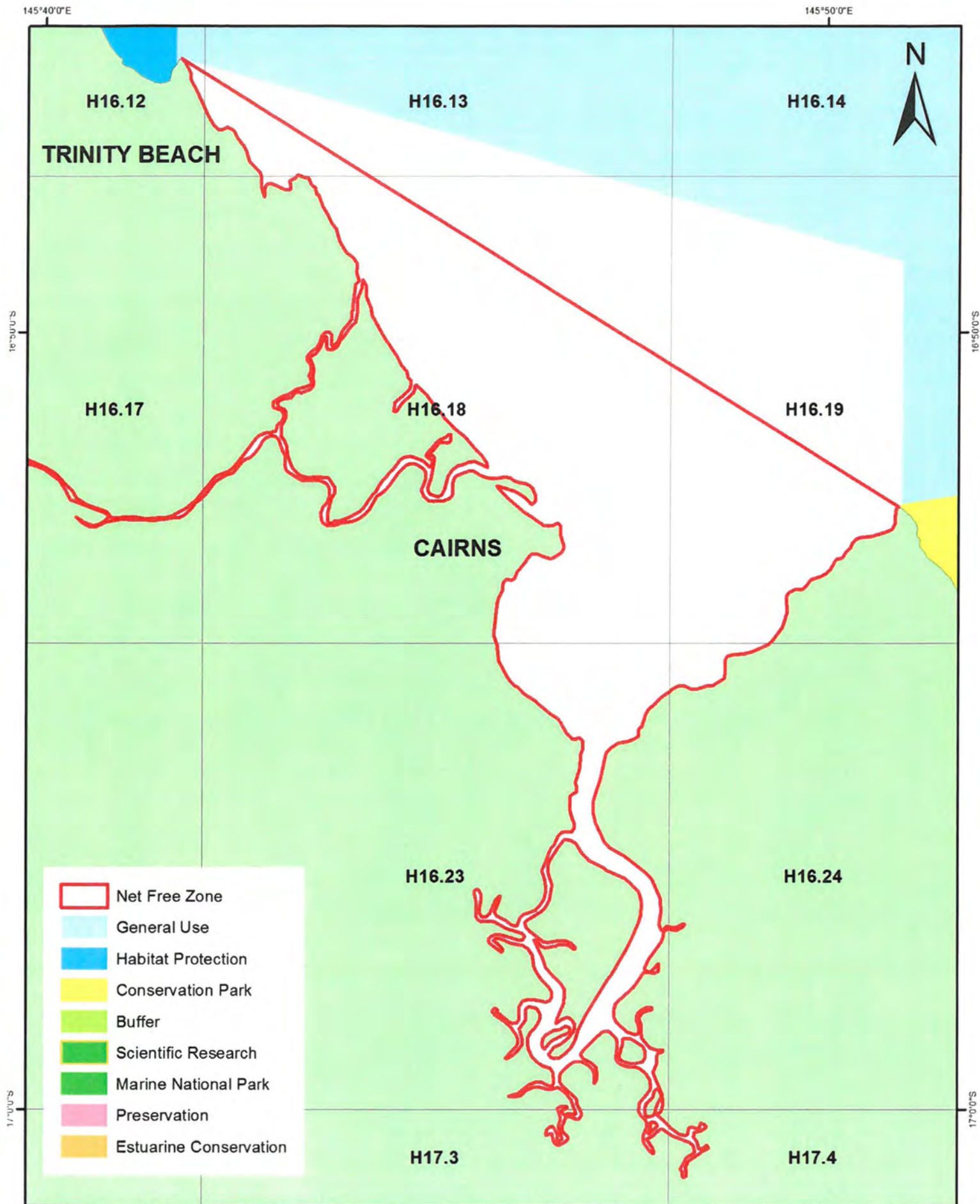
Since the inquiry began four Racing Queensland staff members have had their employment terminated. Their positions were:

- Chief Executive Officer;
- General Manager, Stewarding and Integrity;
- Finance Officer, Accounts Receivable (termination during probation period); and
- Handicapper, Harness (termination during probation period).

Also as advised during the Hearing, no officers from the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing have had their employment terminated.

Documents Tabled at Hearing

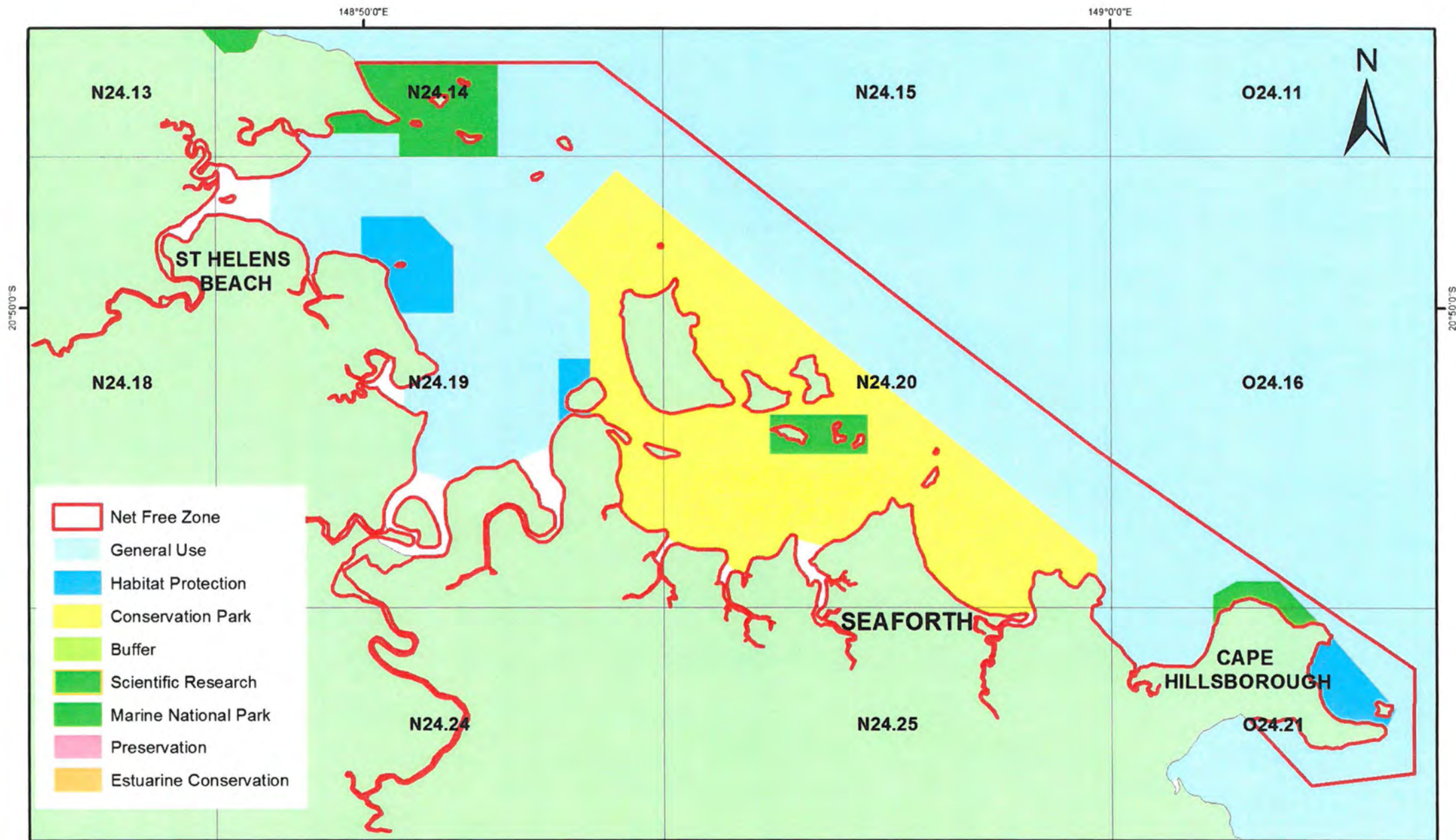
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE



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legislation (eg Regulation or Management
Plan) for the exact boundaries of an area.



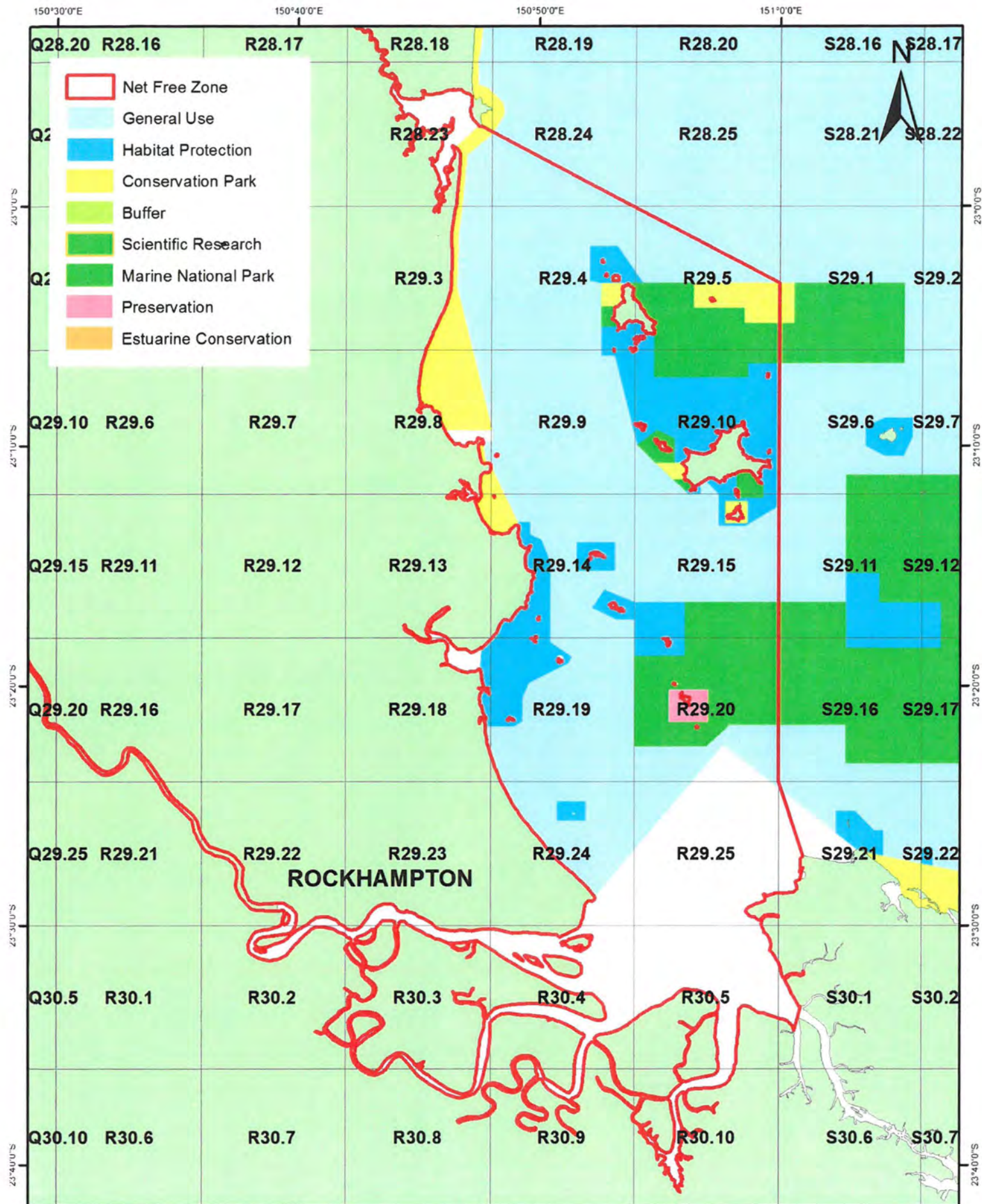
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 Kilometres



Queensland food and fibre policy

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A message from the Minister

The Queensland Government is committed to supporting the growth of a productive and prosperous food and fibre sector. Estimated to be valued at \$15.02 billion in 2014–15 (*AgTrends update April 2015*), the sector contributes significantly to the Queensland economy.

Around one in seven working Queenslanders are employed by the agricultural supply chain. Supporting a prosperous and sustainable food and fibre sector will generate long-term jobs, underpinning the economies of our regional and rural communities.

Strong regional and rural economies in turn support local businesses, schools, hospitals and other services, creating prosperous, vibrant, self-sustainable communities. With the globalisation of our markets, it is important that Queensland industries enhance their profitability and growing Asian markets present significant opportunities.

A whole-of-supply-chain approach will drive job creation beyond traditional on-farm employment towards value-adding, exporting and marketing. High-end, value-added products targeting the emerging middle classes in Asia will provide additional opportunities for the sector.

Looking to the future, research and development will be critical to ensure our food and fibre industries are sustainable and the impact on our natural resources (like the Great Barrier Reef) is minimised. This will be particularly important as we further develop the agricultural and pastoral capacity of North Queensland.

Research and development partnerships will be critical to the development of innovative technologies, including remote sensing, robotics, unmanned aerial vehicles and industrial biotechnology. This will be achieved by increasing the productivity of the traditional food and fibre sector, as well as stimulating new industries and servicing niche, high-value markets.

However, we must ensure that Queensland can create and attract a world-class agricultural workforce that can support a modern, innovative and productive sector. We need to work with non-government organisations and industry to ensure that workers with appropriate skills are matched with employers. Equally, we need to provide the opportunity for all workers to gain or update their skills so they can also work in this vibrant sector.

Shared responsibilities between governments and industry is central to managing the risks of pests and diseases, ensuring sustainable natural resource use and addressing impediments to growth through infrastructure, planning and logistics—we are all responsible for the ongoing success of our food and fibre industries. We need to support the food and fibre sector to capitalise on emerging export opportunities, enhance global competitiveness and build on Queensland's reputation as a provider of world-class tropical research and development.

Queensland has a unique opportunity to capitalise on our strengths and grow our food and fibre industries in a sustainable way. This policy outlines the way forward—taking advantage of opportunities while confronting the challenges.

Honourable Bill Byrne MP

Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing

Challenges

On coming into office, the Government faces a back drop of the resources boom slowing and unemployment higher than it has been in 11 years (Australian Bureau of Statistics labour force survey, April 2015).

Some of Queensland's major, more traditional, advanced-economy export destinations within Asia are seeing more modest growth than previously experienced (e.g. China, Republic of Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan) and some are slowing (e.g. Japan). The United States and the Eurozone are still showing mixed signs and, in some cases, significant slowdowns.

To meet the needs of this new era of agricultural production, industry needs to ensure there is a pool of skilled people able to meet the demand. However, connecting skilled workers in urban and peri-urban areas with regional areas is essential for future growth. Agricultural education and skills training will be critical to develop the workforce needed now and in the future.

Biosecurity will always present challenges, as pests and diseases continue to spread around the world through the increasing movement of people and products. Agricultural productivity is particularly susceptible—as is the Queensland environment and our way of life—and it is critical that Queensland ensures its biosecurity capability is world-class.

Agricultural productivity has now reduced to the same level as the whole economy. Research and development can boost growth and invigorate the food and fibre sector with more strategic investments and innovative technologies and practices.

Whole-of-supply-chain approaches are critical, as input costs increase. Efficiencies must be sought from gate to plate to ensure the profitable supply of food and fibre products to markets.



Solutions

Our vision is to support a productive and prosperous food and fibre sector. We will continue to deliver key services across the sector and refocus those services in five priority areas:

- drive growth, efficiency and sustainability
- support a modern and skilled workforce
- advance research and development
- improve Queensland's biosecurity capability
- deliver service innovation.

We will work with industry associations, research bodies and all levels of government to secure the future of the agricultural industry through planning and capitalising on regional opportunities. These services will enable businesses to build capacity and improve productivity, manage risks and increase resilience. Supporting sustainable, long-term management of Queensland's natural resources will also enable the economic growth of the sector.

Focused work around prevention of, response to and recovery from biosecurity threats will mitigate the risks and impacts of animal and plant pests, diseases and weeds to the economy, the environment, social amenity and human health. Services also maintain market and consumer confidence by ensuring the welfare of animals and reducing the risk of agricultural chemical contamination.

Drive growth, efficiency and sustainability

The food and fibre sector is uniquely placed as a mainstay of the Queensland economy. Burgeoning global food demand, driven largely by emerging Asian markets, provides unprecedented opportunities for sector growth.

Working with industry is essential to drive growth and innovation across the entire supply chain, particularly with respect to opportunities presented by North Queensland agricultural initiatives.

At a community level, a productive and prosperous food and fibre sector will drive job creation in regional and rural Queensland.

In consultation with our stakeholders, we will:

- support and monitor the horticulture code of practice
- drive potential domestic and international market expansion with industry partners
- improve the efficiency of transport and logistics across the supply chain
- seek to renegotiate a memorandum of understanding on the delivery of grazing and grains best management practice systems
- work cooperatively across agencies to ensure we adopt a whole-of-supply-chain approach to policy.





Support a modern and skilled workforce

Queensland's regional and rural communities have much to offer in terms of opportunity and lifestyle. However, many people are unsure about the availability of jobs or the skills needed by prospective employers.

Continuing to develop a modern and skilled workforce is essential to future growth in a globalised market. Industry, schools, Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges and local universities will be critical entry points for new rural workforce employees with contemporary skills crucial for industry growth.

In consultation with our stakeholders, we will:

- Implement the rural jobs initiative in conjunction with industry to address labour issues facing Queensland's food and fibre sector
- implement the new partnership agreement between Central Queensland University and the Queensland Agriculture Training Colleges to deliver skill-based training.

Advance research and development

Research and development innovation will be promoted by close engagement with key funding bodies, such as industry-owned research and development corporations. Partnerships between our department and the university sector will be critical to leveraging funding, skills and knowledge, and driving innovation.

A network of strategically placed regional research facilities will support research and development into key commodities across the entire state.

To develop a sustainable and productive sector specialising in high-value and value-added products that can compete in an increasingly globalised market, we will:

- modernise food and fibre technologies across the supply chain that currently limit the potential of the sector
- develop a research and development blueprint with a focus on productivity growth
- support Queensland technology through to commercialisation.



Improve Queensland's biosecurity capability

Queensland's biosecurity preparedness and response capability needs to match the world's best practice. It is a shared responsibility.

Enhanced biosecurity capability will help respond to new biosecurity threats (such as Panama disease tropical race 4) that threaten our food and fibre industries.

Working in partnership with industry and the community to strengthen our biosecurity capability will help position our state as a leader in biosecurity management, and protect our productive food and fibre industries, our lifestyle and our environment.

To achieve this, we will:

- invest \$5 million in the control of wild dog and feral cat populations
- establish a new animal welfare advisory board to address animal welfare issues
- improve our regulatory models to deliver flexible, responsive and proportionate regulation through the implementation of the *Biosecurity Act 2014* and related regulations
- implement a biosecurity information management system that supports timely data capture and analysis to improve the management of day-to-day business and emergency responses
- conduct a detailed review of Queensland's biosecurity capability
- work in partnership with Queensland's agricultural industries, within the national biosecurity system, to ensure the state's interests are represented and our efforts to increase Queensland's preparedness and responsiveness to biosecurity risks are supported nationally.

We are also committed to partnering with other agencies, local governments and industry to deliver more sustainable outcomes for our agricultural producers affected by pests and diseases.

Deliver service innovation

Innovative approaches and more effective ways of engaging with stakeholders and delivering services to our customers will support the growth of a prosperous and profitable food and fibre sector.

To enhance industry engagement and promote the exchange and adoption of ideas and innovation across the sector, we will:

- build on the development of technologies, such as smart apps and e-extension, to create additional and more advanced modes of engagement and innovation across the food and fibre sector
- further streamline regulatory requirements and administrative processes.

Our commitment

We have a unique opportunity to capitalise on our strengths and grow our food and fibre industries in a sustainable way.

To meet our challenges, enable the food and fibre sector to increase productivity and prosperity, and drive long-term job creation in regional and rural Queensland, we will work in partnership with industry and stakeholders across the entire supply chain.

We will:

- work cooperatively across agencies, including Trade and Investment Queensland, and adopt a whole-of-supply-chain approach to policy
- support existing drought relief arrangements until 2018, and work concurrently with industry to develop and enhance a suite of measures that will assist producers to improve their climate risk-management and preparedness strategies for the longer term
- support rural job opportunities in conjunction with industry
- develop a 10-year research and development blueprint for agriculture and food to enhance scientific collaboration within the state, ensure research is aligned with emerging opportunities and seek new and innovative ways to attract new funds
- support industry initiatives for the development of a national multi-peril crop insurance scheme to provide insurance cover for a range of climatic events that could result in a poor harvest (such as drought or floods)
- support and monitor the horticulture code of practice between growers and retailers
- conduct a detailed review of Queensland's biosecurity capability to develop a long-term plan that restores our state's biosecurity response to world's best practice standards



- implement the new partnership agreement between Central Queensland University and the Queensland Agriculture Training Colleges to deliver skill-based training
- support three government-sponsored outbound trade missions per year in conjunction with industry to support traditional food and fibre products, and encourage niche, new and emerging products
- provide an additional \$5 million over three years to leverage additional investment by local government and industry to support new initiatives aimed at destroying wild dog and feral cat populations
- establish a new animal welfare advisory board comprising technical, community and industry representatives to advise the Minister on issues associated with the development and promotion of codes of practices for the humane treatment of animals—on farm, in transport and at point of slaughter.

To achieve an increase in agricultural productivity and more prosperous communities, we will continue to deliver key services, collaborate with stakeholders and support the growth of the Queensland food and fibre sector.





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13 25 23

MEDIA RELEASE

Document Tabled:

By -

No. 5

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DOES NOT SUPPORT NET-FISHING BANS

A Rockhampton-based Federal Government MP has rebutted claims by State Agriculture Minister Bill Byrne that Canberra supports proposed net-fishing bans in the region.

"Net-fishing bans in the Rockhampton, Mackay and Cairns regions are strictly Queensland Government proposals," Coalition Senator Matt Canavan said today. "They are in no way endorsed or supported by the Commonwealth Government.

"If State Agriculture Minister Bill Byrne wants to put 50 or 60 fishing families and other seafood operators out of business, he shouldn't try to pretend the Federal Government in any way supports his job-destroying proposal."

In a radio interview in Rockhampton, Mr Byrne suggested the Federal Government supported the bans.

He told an interviewer: "Of course, we see the Federal Environment Minister has signed off on these net free zones as part of the Reef 2050 plan. We've got the federal Liberal National Party support(ing) these zones as part of the Reef 2050 plan."

Senator Canavan said: "Bill's just verballing the Coalition Government. I have spoken to Environment Minister Greg Hunt and he in no way, shape or form supports Bill Byrnes' net bans."

"The Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan is a plan in which both the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments have inserted elements. Since the State election on January 31, the new Queensland Government added a few sentences about net-fishing bans in three areas in the Rockhampton, Mackay and Cairns regions. The State Government owns those bans, not the Commonwealth.

"The 2050 Plan is about sustainability of the Great Barrier Reef. Bill's bans are about taking fish from seafood consumers and giving them to recreational fishermen. That seafood swap is not about sustainability but nonetheless the new State Government wants it in the Plan.

"The Reef Plan is a 100-page document with complex elements. It was an essential tool in the successful task of demonstrating to UNESCO that the Great Barrier Reef is not in danger. The Commonwealth was not going to die in a ditch over three sentences that Bill wanted added about proposed net bans.

"But he should not say the bans have Federal Government support. They do not. His arguments must be pretty weak if he has to try to justify the bans by saying we support them.

"Personally, I believe a compromise should be found that allows professional fishing families and other seafood business operators to continue supplying local seafood to the vast majority of people in coastal communities who never ever go fishing themselves but do enjoy a feed of fresh fish."

FURTHER INFORMATION: Matthew Canavan 0429 680 276
 Martin Bowerman 0428 303 189

Note: Audio of the radio interview can be heard here:

Friday 3 July 2015

Agriculture and Environment Committee
Estimates Hearing
21.08.2015

Document Tabled:

By - NANAKA 8.31 am
No. 6

Crew caught with concealed crabs: Fined \$20k; boat, motor and trailer seized

News release | 01-Jun-2015

Three crabbers have been fined a total of \$20,650 and had their fishing boat, motor, trailer and crab pots seized after they were caught with a stash of undersized and female crabs.

The three were caught in possession of 58 illegal crabs, stored in a hidden compartment in the floor of their vessel, during an interception by a Queensland Boating and Fisheries patrol near Victoria Point, Redlands, last September.

Fisheries officer, Mr James Hohenhaus, said the crabbers had been under extensive surveillance before officers stepped in.

"We watched the fishers for a number of hours from different locations and could see all of the fishers pulling up and checking crab pots," Mr Hohenhaus said.

"On inspection, however, we only found five mud crabs and one legal bream, and a number of crab pots, and were concerned that the floor of the vessel had been modified.

"The fishers were given a written notice to deliver the vessel to the Redlands QBFP station for further inspection

"During the inspection, officers used telescopic cameras and found a hidden compartment under the floor of the vessel.

"We proceeded to complete a full inspection of the boat and found 37 bags in the secret compartment containing 69 live mud crabs – 24 undersized male mud crabs, 34 female mud crabs and 11 legal male mud crabs

"We seized the entire catch and returned all crabs alive to the water."

Mr Hohenhaus said Queenslanders love their crabs and rules are in place to protect them.

"The rules around the number, age and type of crabs that can be taken are very clear and pleading ignorance is no defence," he said.

"In handing down the penalty, the Magistrate considered that the defendants' activities appeared to be a very sophisticated operation in which they concealed crabs.

²All fishers pleaded guilty in the Cleveland Magistrates Court and were charged with unlawful possession of undersized and female mud crabs.

"One of the defendants was also charged with obstruction and two defendants were charged with making false and misleading statements about being asleep on the boat.

"This should serve as a big warning to anyone involved in illegal crabbing and modifying vessels to create hidden compartments for their catch."

Mr Hohenhaus said they would like to thank those people who provided information to QBFP which greatly assisted in the final apprehension.

If you suspect illegal fishing, whether you see it in person or online, report it to the Fishwatch hotline on 1800 017 116. Do not approach the people involved, as this can compromise an investigation.



Hon Bill Byrne MP
Minister for Agriculture
Minister for Sport and Recreation

Agriculture and Environment Committee 10.41.
Estimates Hearing
21.08.2015

Document Tabled:

By -

No. 1

Min Byrne

Reference: 17497/15

10 AUG 2015

Level 8
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Queensland 4001 Australia
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Email agriculture@ministerial.qld.gov.au

The Honourable Barnaby Joyce MP
Minister for Agriculture
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Minister

I am pleased to announce that the nationally cost-shared National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program in Yarwun, in the Gladstone Regional Council area has reached an important milestone in the effort to eradicate the Yarwun (2013) incursion of red imported fire ants (fire ants).

Extensive surveillance undertaken across the entire fire ant restricted area in Yarwun, Targinie and Curtis Island in July 2015 found no evidence of fire ants. This surveillance follows the six rounds of treatment and two rounds of surveillance undertaken by the national program since the fire ants were confirmed in December 2013 at Yarwun. Visual surveillance was undertaken using field teams while a team of highly trained odour detection dogs conducted surveillance of all suitable fire ant habitat.

It is anticipated that after the second round of verification surveillance scheduled for June 2016, Gladstone can again be declared free from fire ants. Genetic analysis has shown that the Yarwun (2013) population of fire ants was not genetically linked to the previous incursion in Yarwun in 2006 and that these most likely originated from the southern United States of America, establishing approximately two to three years prior to detection. The previous incursion was deemed eradicated in 2010.

The eradication of the 2006 incursion and the pleasing results of the latest round of surveillance for the 2013 incursion of fire ants in the Yarwun area has demonstrated the success of the national cost-share arrangements in the fight against fire ants.

I thank you for your support in eradicating this devastating pest from this part of Australia. Fire ants are one of the world's most invasive species and eradication measures to prevent them from establishing permanently in Australia must be maintained to prevent the significant impacts they will have on our economy, environment, agriculture, health and way of life.

If you require any further information regarding this matter, please contact Mr Elliot Stein, Chief of Staff, in my Office on telephone 07 3719 7560.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'B Byrne', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Honourable Bill Byrne MP
Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and
Minister for Sport and Racing
Member for Rockhampton

*Correspondence Clarifying
Statements made at Hearing*

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE



Hon Bill Byrne MP
Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries
Minister for Sport and Racing

Our Ref: CTS 20327/15

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31 AUG 2015

Ms Jennifer Howard MP
Chair
Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Ms Howard

I write to you regarding the Estimates Hearing for the Sport and Racing component of my portfolio on 21 August 2015, by the Agriculture and Environment Committee. Upon reviewing the Hansard Proof from the Estimates Hearing, I have identified a number of clarifications that I would like to bring to the Committee's attention.

The below clarification relates to the transcript on page 36 of the Hansard Proof in relation to the QBRED scheme.

Attributable to myself (**MR BYRNE**):

"As a result of this injection, in the 2015-16 season the QBRED scheme will carry \$1.81 million in stakes. This is made up of QBRED feature races of \$890,000, QBRED bonuses of \$905,000 and QBRED certificates of \$15,000."

The budget for the 2015-16 season is \$2.164 million in stakes. This is made up of QBRED feature races of \$890,000, QBRED bonuses of \$1.259 million and QBRED certificates of \$15,000.

The \$1.81 million I referred to was the 2014-15 budget made up of QBRED feature races of \$890,000, QBRED bonuses of \$905,000 and QBRED certificates of \$15,000.

The below clarification relates to the transcript on page 38 of the Hansard Proof in relation to estimated revenue.

Attributable to myself (**MR BYRNE**):

"Total revenue for the financial year 2015-16 is slightly down by \$2.2 million from an estimated revenue for financial year 2015-16 of \$183.4 million, which is currently subject to an annual audit."

The estimated revenue I referred to of \$183.4 million is for the 2014-15 financial year, which is currently subject to an annual audit.

The below clarifications relate to the transcript on pages 38 and 42 of the Hansard Proof respectively in relation to greyhound kennel inspections.

Attributable to myself (MR BYRNE):

"Between the day the scandal broke and 19 August this year, Racing Queensland stewards conducted 732 inspections of properties, which equates to approximately 93 per cent of the 790 kennel addresses across the state."

As the number of kennels can fluctuate daily depending on the number of new licence applicants, who require kennel inspections, and those who choose not to renew and no longer require an inspection. I must clarify that the 790 kennel addresses referred to is the figure identified at the time the scandal broke on 16 February 2015.

Attributable to myself (MR BYRNE):


"Madam Chair, I should make a correction. I talked about 190 kennels being left to inspect. I have just been advised, as things have moved on, that the actual number is 58. If that can be adjusted on the record of the committee that would be appreciated."

When responding to a question relating to greyhound kennel inspections, I referred to 58 kennels remaining across the State to be inspected. This figure relates to the 790 registered kennels that were identified the day the scandal broke on 16 February 2015.

In the time since 16 February 2015, some licensees have opted not to renew their licenses and no longer require kennel inspections. There have also been new licence applicants, who require inspections. With this in mind, the number of registered kennels in the state may change daily.

I provide this clarification for consideration of the Committee and ask that this additional information be provided with the Committee's final Estimates Report. Should you have any further enquiries, please contact Mr Elliot Stein, Chief of Staff in my office on telephone (07) 3719 7560.

Yours sincerely



The Honourable Bill Byrne MP
Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries
Minister for Sport and Racing
Member for Rockhampton

*Minister for Environment and Heritage
Protection and Minister for National Parks
and the Great Barrier Reef*

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Answers to Questions on Notice

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING
GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

No. Gov-1

asked on Wednesday, 29 July 2015

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION AND MINISTER FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF (HON DR S MILES)—

QUESTION:

With reference to page 6 of the DEHP Service Delivery Statements, one of the 2015-16 service area highlights in Species and Ecosystem Protection Services is to “improve the management of crocodiles so as to address human safety risk on a sound scientific footing and ensure that the human safety impact outcomes desired by the community are delivered whilst being able to assess and address impacts on the conservation of the species”. Will the Minister explain to the committee how this initiative will be progressed?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government maintains public safety as the highest priority when it comes to managing crocodiles. However, due regard must be given to the sustainability of the species and for a scientific approach that validates the most effective way to manage crocodiles to maximise human safety. Some renowned crocodile scientists were critical of a lack of scientific and conservation input to crocodile management under the previous government. The impact of the previous government's policy on crocodile populations in Queensland is not known, and there is no objective evidence available as to the benefits of the policy for public safety.

In 2012, the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (EHP) engaged an expert team from the University of Queensland to review the State's methodology for surveying of crocodiles for the purposes of population, distribution and trends. The outcome of this review was used by EHP to refine its proposed approach to surveying.

The Government proposes to build on this review through engaging with experts in the field of crocodile surveying and wildlife population modelling in the first instance, to assist in further defining the objectives and implementation of a program to enhance our scientific knowledge of crocodiles in the wild. Following this, the Government intends to undertake a broader level of engagement – including with crocodile conservation and industry experts, as well as the community – to inform the future approach to crocodile management in Queensland.

Pilot Crocodile Management Plans (CMPs) inherited from the previous government are currently in place for the Townsville, Cairns, Cassowary Coast and Hinchinbrook

local government areas until 2016. Additionally, Crocodile Urban Management Areas (CUMAs) are in force in Mackay, Rockhampton and Gladstone.

The Government has initially committed to a staged review of the Townsville and Cairns CMPs and has already visited these locations to hear from local stakeholders about their concerns regarding crocodile management. There remains the continued opportunity for councils with CMPs to request refinements to those plans while the Government's review proceeds.

In line with the Government's election commitment, EHP has also commenced targeted consultation and a risk assessment regarding the proposed expansion of the Rockhampton CUMA.

The Government's approach will be one which is led by robust scientific evidence, with decisions based on considerations of both human safety and conservation. It is also important to acknowledge that it is not feasible to keep crocodiles out of populated areas entirely, and therefore educating the public on 'croc-wise' behaviour to promote safety in crocodile habitat will continue to be a key element of the revised approach.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING
GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

No. Gov-2

asked on Wednesday, 29 July 2015

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION AND MINISTER FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF (HON DR S MILES)—

QUESTION:

“Annual percentage increase in the total amount of land secured that will be rehabilitated as new koala habitat” is listed in the DEHP Service Delivery Statement at page 9 as a discontinued performance measure. Will the Minister outline why this measure has been discontinued?

ANSWER:

After the failure of their initial approach, a decision was made by the previous LNP government to redirect koala habitat acquisition activities on the purchase of resilient areas of existing koala habitat that would improve landscape connectivity for the species across its range in Queensland. The funding source for this program (koala habitat offsets from State Government infrastructure providers, principally Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR), was declining. DTMR made the decision to deliver their offsets themselves, rather than contributing to the Koala Offsets Fund Community Infrastructure. Rehabilitation of land is a very expensive exercise, even more so when the land had to be acquired as well. It was considered that better koala conservation results could be achieved by acquiring and protecting existing habitat, particularly in the face of dwindling funds. In addition, very few substantially cleared properties provided either landscape connectivity or had valuations that met landholder's expectations.

The decision of the previous minister to direct resources to the acquisition of existing habitat has made this measure redundant.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING
GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

No. Gov-3

asked on Wednesday, 29 July 2015

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION AND MINISTER FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF (HON DR S MILES)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the additional \$1.75 Million allocated to wildlife management and conservation, presented on page 37 of Budget Paper 4, can the Minister advise the Committee what this Government is doing to protect the koala across Queensland?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government has maintained all limited life and base funding for koala protection and management. In 15/16 it will provide a further \$600,000 beyond these existing allocations for this purpose from an additional \$1.75 million that it has allocated to wildlife management.

The Government's efforts in taking forward the pending listing of the koala as a vulnerable species State-wide under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, rather than just in South East Queensland, will drive an increased focus on koala conservation across the extent of their range throughout Queensland.

The revised listing will elevate the need for local governments in locations where koalas occur to consider potential impacts on the species in certain development applications and broaden the public focus on the conservation of this iconic animal.

The additional \$600,000 funding towards koala conservation and management will provide \$384,000 to complete koala distribution and abundance surveys in South East Queensland and initiate the collation of information and expansion of surveys of populations living outside of this region

The remainder of the new funding allocation will enable the Daisy Hill Koala Centre to continue to deliver public information, education and engagement services as it has done over the past 20 years. It will also assist in providing for the Moggill Koala Hospital to continue to care for sick, injured and orphaned koalas and to support collaborative koala research activities.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING
GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

No. Gov-4

asked on Wednesday, 29 July 2015

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION AND MINISTER FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF (HON DR S MILES)—

QUESTION:

Budget Paper No 4, at page 37, shows that DEHP is receiving new funding in 2015-16 for supplementation for underground coal gasification investigations. Can the Minister please inform the Committee why this funding is necessary?

ANSWER:

The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (EHP) is leading the compliance response on the extent of contamination which the Department alleges is sourced from underground coal gasification in the Hopeland area. This is the largest compliance response ever undertaken by EHP. It has involved considerable effort on the part of the project team concerned. Independent experts retained by EHP have overseen the drilling of 270 monitoring bores and have prepared a 300 page expert report for use in the litigation. The experts' report is being peer reviewed by the University of Queensland. EHP and its consultants (as well as other Government departments) have committed significant resources in conducting field investigations over the course of a number of months. Some field work continues.

The funding referred to in the budget paper is necessary because the investigation is ongoing and EHP is continuing to commit significant resources to establishing the full nature and extent of contamination. Significant resources have also been committed for the purpose of preparing for the prosecution of the company allegedly responsible. Considerable effort has also been employed to keep landholders up to date with the latest information.

Additionally, EHP is involved in major litigation in multiple courts. Independent expert assistance and legal expenses constitute the majority of the expenditure. Funding will be needed to continue this work until the conclusion of the legal proceedings.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING
GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

No. Gov-5

asked on Wednesday, 29 July 2015

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION AND MINISTER FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF (HON DR S MILES)—

QUESTION:

Page 2 of the DEHP Service Delivery Statements discloses that one of the strategic environmental challenges facing Queensland is to ensure that coastal planning makes allowances for expected sea level rise. In 2015-16, what does the Queensland Government propose to do to address this challenge?

ANSWER:

The previous LNP government removed policies and mapping that took account of climate change impacts from the planning framework.

The expected impacts of sea level rise are very serious. Coastal erosion will be an increasing risk to all coastal communities as low lying areas are permanently inundated. This includes many highly developed urban areas in Brisbane, Mackay, Townsville and other urban centres.

Sandy coasts will respond to sea level rise by eroding and we can typically expect significant shoreline retreat.

Storm tides will be increasingly higher than those that we saw with Cyclones Yasi, Larry and Dylan. They will be even more destructive with another 0.8m in height from sea level rise by 2100.

Understanding and planning for the risk of sea level rises due to climate change is not new: the state government has included sea level rise into the calculation of erosion prone area on the coast since in 1995, except, that is, for a short period between May 2014 and July 2015.

The Palaszczuk Government accepts the causes and consequences of climate change are real.

Accordingly, this government is committed to reinstating allowances for expected sea level rise due to climate change into relevant mapping and planning instruments.

Implementation of allowances within coastal planning for expected sea level rise requires amendments to statutory and non-statutory coastal hazard mapping that is

"called up" under the State planning and development system. Three mapping products are required to be amended: the erosion prone area plans; the coastal hazard area maps; and the coastal management district maps.

On 8 July 2015 the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection declared new erosion prone areas for the Queensland coast and published maps showing the storm tide inundation extent. These coastal hazard risk areas have been recalculated by including a sea level rise factor of 0.8 metres, which accounts for the projected rise by 2100 resulting from climate change effects. Erosion prone areas are a technical assessment of coastal erosion risk. The inundation mapping is based on an average return interval storm event of one percent which is the probability of a one in 100 year storm event occurring. The new mapping is very similar to the erosion prone areas rescinded in 2014 by the previous government.

On 20 July 2015, a new coastal management district (CMD), based on the revised erosion prone areas, was released for public consultation. The CMD is declared by regulation and is the area where certain development under the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* must be referred for State assessment and decision by the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (DILGP), which falls under the Deputy Premier's portfolio responsibilities.

Incorporation of sea level rise into the State Planning Policy and State Development Assessment Provisions is in progress. DILGP updated the State Development Assessment Provisions on 6 July 2015 and work on the State Planning Policy is in progress.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING
GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

No. Gov-6

asked on Wednesday, 29 July 2015

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION AND MINISTER FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF (HON DR S MILES)—

QUESTION:

As shown at page 6 of the DEHP Service Delivery Statements, a key function of the Department is to deliver Species and Ecosystem Protection Services that will, amongst other outcomes, minimise negative interactions between wildlife and communities. How is the Queensland Government managing potential negative interactions between communities and flying foxes?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government is committed to conserving flying-foxes as an essential part of Queensland's biodiversity, while implementing a sustainable and humane management approach where flying-foxes are causing significant community concern. The Government appreciates that having a flying-fox roost nearby can be a source of unpleasant noise and smell for residents and that residents may also have concerns about potential health risks from viruses carried by flying-foxes.

Health risks from flying-foxes are in general very low. This risk can be further reduced by avoiding any contact with flying-foxes. In the event a person is bitten or scratched by a flying-fox there is a post-exposure vaccination to minimise the possibility of transmission of Australian Bat Lyssavirus. The other virus of concern that can be carried by flying-foxes, Hendra virus, can only be transmitted to humans from horses. Horses can be vaccinated against contracting the Hendra virus.

In November 2013, councils in Queensland were provided with a standing statutory right to conduct non-lethal flying-fox roost management activities, including dispersal, in urban areas under a code of practice. Local governments proposing to undertake roost management activities outside of urban areas or under the code of practice can apply for a flying-fox roost management permit. Private individuals wishing to manage flying-foxes on their properties can also apply for a flying-fox roost management permit.

Between 1 July 2014 and 30 June 2015, 17 local governments undertook 38 roost management activities at 25 roosts under their standing right. In the same period, 3 flying-fox roost management permits were issued to a private individual, a company and a local government.

The other aspect to the flying-fox management framework is concerned with mitigation the impact of flying foxes on crops, particularly commercial fruit crops.

At present, a damage mitigation permit (DMP) can be obtained which allows for lethal take of flying-foxes for the purposes of crop protection, subject to conditions and compliance with the *Code of Practice – Ecologically sustainable lethal take of flying foxes for crop protection* that includes animal welfare considerations. This measure was reintroduced by the previous government and uptake by fruit growers of the lethal take DMPs has been conservative.

Between 1 July 2014 and 30 June 2015, EHP issued 14 DMPs authorising lethal take of flying-foxes. Departmental records show only 340 animals were actually culled.

The Government is aware some concerns have been raised in the community and media in relation to animal welfare considerations, as well as the effectiveness of the current flying-fox roost management framework.

The Government is committed to closely examining the current flying-fox roost management arrangements to ensure that Queensland has frameworks in place that are effective but grounded in science and are not putting flying-fox populations at risk.

At this time, the scope and timing of any potential changes to the flying-fox management framework in Queensland is under consideration.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING
GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

No. Gov-7

asked on Wednesday, 29 July 2015

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION AND MINISTER FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF (HON DR S MILES)—

QUESTION:

A 'Service Area Highlight' identified on page 6 of the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection's Service Delivery Statement, is to 'work with traditional owners, stakeholders and communities to introduce protections for Queensland's pristine rivers from large scale industrial operations'. Will the Minister advise the Committee of the Government's plans for this work in 2015-16?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring the State's unspoilt rivers are protected for the significant environmental, social and economic benefits they represent.

The protection of these resources makes social, environmental and economic sense.

Over 2015-2016, the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection will work with the Department of Natural Resources and Mines and the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning to ensure a coordinated approach is taken to assessing existing protections and identifying any potential policy changes.

I have instructed the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection to ensure that an evidence-based approach is taken to any policy changes, taking into account all these dimensions.

Any policy changes will be developed in partnership with Traditional Owners, and input from the community and industry.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING
GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

No. Gov-8

asked on Wednesday, 29 July 2015

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION AND MINISTER FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF (HON DR S MILES)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the 2015-16 Service Area Highlights identified on page 3 of the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection Service Delivery Statement, can the Minister outline to the Committee how this Government is working with the North Stradbroke Island community and businesses to make arrangements to phase out sand mining on North Stradbroke Island?

ANSWER:

I am pleased to report the Government and relevant departments including the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (EHP) and the Department of State Development (DSD) have been consulting with the North Stradbroke Island community and businesses in order to plan for the transition of the North Stradbroke Island economy away from sand mining. I have personally met with a range of interested parties over the past few months.

To support North Stradbroke Island's transition to a post-mining economy, the Government has committed \$20 million towards the development of the North Stradbroke Island Economic Transition Strategy and Action Plan. As lead agency in the development of the strategy, DSD has consulted with key stakeholders Redlands City Council, Straddie Chamber of Commerce and the native title holders, the Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation and Sibelco to identify potential actions which may support ongoing economic growth for North Stradbroke Island.

I am working closely with other Ministers across multiple portfolios to ensure the development of the Economic Transition Strategy and Action Plan takes into account the interests and needs of North Stradbroke Island's community. Once the Economic Transition Strategy and the Action Plan are finalised, the \$20 million will be provided to deliver the actions that will provide the best support for a long term sustainable economy for North Stradbroke Island.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING
GOVERNMENT
QUESTION ON NOTICE**

No. 9

asked on Wednesday, 29 July 2015

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION AND MINISTER FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF (HON DR S MILES)—

QUESTION:

The Service Delivery Statement for the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing identifies, at page 3, that the objective of the National Parks program is to manage parks and forests in a way that sustains natural and cultural values. What are the implications of this objective for the practice of allowing cattle grazing on national parks, and other properties, and what are the Minister's plans to address expiring grazing authorities on national parks?

ANSWER:

In terms of the lands managed by the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing, grazing mostly occurs on State forests. Where grazing authorities still exist on national parks, it is usually a legacy of the forest transfer process where State forests were transferred to national park tenure, and graziers have been given time to adapt their business operations.

Unlike the previous government, who viewed national parks as a resource to be exploited, this Government recognises that grazing is, in most instances, inconsistent with the cardinal principle for the management of national parks.

I have therefore instructed the department to review the issues associated with the grazing legacy on national parks, being mindful that there are only a small number of grazing authorities on national parks, as distinct from those in state forests. I recognise that these graziers are seeking direction and security to manage their business and am also mindful they have current lawful authorities to graze their cattle on national parks.

I intend to also take into account the drought situation of expiring authorities, to provide any necessary flexibility to accommodate the impact of drought if and when necessary.

This Government is committed to ensuring that our national parks are first and foremost for nature conservation.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING
GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. Gov-10

asked on Wednesday, 29 July 2015

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION AND MINISTER FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF (HON DR S MILES)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the Budget Papers 3 and 4, and the Service Delivery Statements from 2015-16 for his portfolio, can the Minister identify any programs that were scheduled to be discontinued under the previous government, the performance and history of those programs, and whether the current government intends to continue them and why?

ANSWER:

Within my portfolio, a number of programs were scheduled to lapse or be discontinued by the previous Government. The previous Government's decisions to treat these programs as non-continuing funding commitments is clearly indicated by the fact that, in the Budget Papers, there are no savings to the Budget bottom line shown from any programs which have now been finalised as planned by the former Government.

In some cases, programs for which there was no-going funding commitment comprised long-standing or core functions of the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, or the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services. The Government has acted to provide new funding in order to continue these functions, and the fact that new funding has been required to maintain these functions is clearly indicated by the fact that, in the Budget Papers, each of these decisions is shown as a call on the Budget bottom line.

I can provide the committee with the following advice on a selection of these lapsing or terminating programs.

Environment for the Future - Nature Refuges (2012-13 Budget Measure)

In 2012-13, the previous Government approved terminating funding of \$7.4 million over three years to support the Environment for the Future — Nature Refuges program. The program provides financial incentives to landholders to secure legally binding nature refuge agreements over land for its conservation. As disclosed in the Budget papers for 2012-13, this program was established at no cost to the Budget bottom line.

In keeping with its election commitment this Government is providing new funding of \$5 million in 2015-16 to continue the NatureAssist program to secure nature refuges

for lands of significant conservation and high climate change value on leasehold and freehold land. This funding compares favourably with the level of effort under the previous Government, as funding allocated by the former Government in 2014-15 was only \$3.2M.

This Government's new funding will maintain the 22 highly experienced permanent staff to deliver the NatureAssist program and support the Queensland Government's highly successful Nature Refuges program with the aim of securing more than 100,000 hectares of new, climate change-resilient nature refuges in 2015-16; continuing the innovative climate change conservation analysis and partnership with the James Cook University and the long-term collaborative relationship with AgForce and peak conservation partners.

The program will also prepare proposals for long-term and sustainable protected areas strategy in consultation with partner organisations and the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing (NPSR) for consideration by Government in 2015-16.

Everyone's Environment – Cleaning Up Our Backyards (2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15 Budget Measure)

No forward funding commitment was made in any Budget for the previous government's "Everyone's Environment" program, which provided small funding grants to community groups. Consequently, no Budget saving has been claimed now that this program has ended.

Total funds allocated over three years came to \$12M. Some \$3M of funds remains unexpended, and it is expected that these funds will not be acquitted until 2018.

Environment for the Future Land Acquisitions (2012-13 Budget Measure)

The previous government allocated terminating funding \$17.2 million over three years towards the acquisition of new national parks in order to protect and conserve Queensland's valuable biodiversity for future generations.

Residual unspent funds at the end of 2014-15 of \$4.3 million have been carried forward to 2015-16 for land acquisitions.

As disclosed in the Budget papers for 2012-13, this program was established at no cost to the Budget bottom line. Similarly, no Budget saving has been claimed now that this program has ended.

Investing to Protect our Koalas (2012-13 Budget Measure)

The previous government provided funding of \$4 million over four years with a focus on habitat connectivity for koala preservation, and re-allocated an additional \$5.4 million over three years at no cost to the Budget.

In 2014-15, the previous Government had allocated \$2.8M to this program, of which \$1.4M has been carried over into 2015-16.

As a 2015-16 Budget Measure, this Government is providing additional funding of \$1.8 million in 2015-16, which will increase total effort on koala-related operational programs to a new high of some \$3M in this year.

The previous government also allocated terminating funding of \$17.1 million over three years towards the acquisition of koala habitat. Performance of this program was unsatisfactory. The former Government redirected its focus in 2014-15 and carry-forwards of over \$10M were accrued due to difficulties in expending these funds.

As disclosed in the Budget papers for 2012-13, this program was established at no cost to the Budget bottom line. Similarly, no Budget saving has been claimed now that this program has ended.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING
NON-GOVERNMENT
QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 1

asked on Wednesday, 29 July 2015

A NON-GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION AND MINISTER FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF (HON DR S MILES)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the public servant numbers detailed in the portfolio SDS, and ask since the assent of the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 can the Minister advise how many public servants within the Department's staffing allocation have had their details supplied to unions under the Government's Union Encouragement Policy - listed in the following format for each portfolio in the Departments of Environment and Heritage Protection

Department	Union Name	Number of Employee details forwarded

ANSWER:

I thank the member for the question.

The Palaszczuk Government made a commitment to restore fairness for government workers.

Union encouragement was one of the many conditions of employment rendered unenforceable during the former government's term. I am proud to defend the right of every worker to join, or not to join, their union.

The *Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2015* (the Act) is one of the ways the Palaszczuk Government is delivering on its commitments. From June 2015, the Act restores the ability for union members to organise and protect workers' employment conditions, including re-enlivening any provisions within industrial instruments requiring new employee details to be passed onto relevant unions

These amendments were important because the former government went further than any Queensland government in history in attacking workers' rights.

The union encouragement policy released in May 2015 provides for new employees to have ready access to a union representative so that they can make an informed decision about whether or not to join a union. The policy operates subject to relevant legislation.

The manner regarding release and reporting of new employee details will vary depending on the industrial instrument. The Government will be consolidating the

number of new employee details provided to unions across the public sector on a quarterly basis. Quarterly reporting is in line with a number of public sector certified agreements such as the State Government Department Certified Agreement (the Core Agreement) which covers nearly 50,000 public servants. From June 2015 the re-enlivened provisions provides that information about new starters is to be provided to relevant unions on a quarterly basis. While some agencies may have released new employee details to unions, the first full quarterly report (the September quarter report) consolidating the number of new employee details provided to unions across the public sector will be available in October 2015.

All public servants are protected by privacy laws and agencies are responsible for complying with those laws. Each agency is required to comply with their relevant industrial instrument(s) regarding union encouragement, including reporting timeframes.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

No. Non-Gov 2

asked on Wednesday, 29 July 2015

A NON-GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION AND MINISTER FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF (HON S MILES)—

QUESTION:

Can the Minister outline how much funding has been allocated to any reviews, inquiries, taskforces or committees established by his department after the 2015 general election for the establishment of the Office of the Great Barrier Reef that will be responsible for overseeing implementation of the government's reef management strategies and programs, including its recent election commitment of \$100 Million dollars over the next five years?

ANSWER:

Since the establishment of the Office of the Great Barrier Reef, the Great Barrier Reef Water Science Taskforce (the Taskforce) has been created to provide advice on the allocation of the additional \$100 million over five years allocated for reef management strategies and programs. Additionally, a Great Barrier Reef Review Group has been formed to provide peer review of the Taskforce's work.

\$250,000 has been allocated to support the Taskforce, including meeting, travel, and small consultancy expenses over the 12 month life of the Taskforce. No sitting fees are being paid to any member of the Taskforce.

In addition, two new committees have been established jointly with the Australian Government to facilitate the implementation of the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan – 1) the Reef 2050 Independent Expert Panel; and 2) the Reef 2050 Advisory Committee. Expenses for both these committees will be shared equally with the Commonwealth Government, with the Office of the Great Barrier Reef allocating \$90,000 for the Independent Expert Panel (IEP), and \$26,000 towards the Reef 2050 Advisory Committee in 2015/16. Sitting fees are provided to the Chair of the Reef 2050 Advisory Committee and experts on the IEP (who aren't government employees). No sitting fees are paid to stakeholder organisations on the Reef 2050 Advisory Committee. This funding has not been allocated out of the additional \$100 million, but will be drawn from existing departmental funds.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

No. Non-Gov 3

asked on Wednesday, 29 July 2015

A NON-GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION AND MINISTER FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF (HON S MILES)—

QUESTION:

With reference to page 57 of the Capital Statement and page 3 of the SDS which both detail the Compliance Renewal Program, will the Minister:

- a) explain why the cost of the program is listed as \$5.5 million in the Capital Statement and \$3.3 million in the SDS (page 15);
- b) provide a detailed breakdown for each element of the program including its cost in each financial year, purpose and the number of staff allocated; and,
- c) provide a detailed breakdown of the compliance role proposed for private certifiers and auditors, and will this component of the Compliance Renewal Program result in a reduction of departmental staff allocated to compliance?

ANSWER:

- a) The \$5.5 million listed in the Capital Statement refers to the total capital budget spend for the Compliance Review Program (CRP), whereas the \$3.3 million outlined in the SDS refers to the 2015-16 capital budget spend allocated to the system development component of the CRP.
- b) The CRP comprises of three projects – the Compliance Framework Project (CFP), the Certified Auditor Project (CAP) and Project Unify.

The CFP is redesigning the compliance framework for the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (EHP) to ensure state-wide consistency in our compliance activities and enable the effective and efficient utilisation of our compliance resources.

The CAP is investigating a framework for harnessing private sector expertise, working alongside EHP to deliver environmental compliance functions.

Project Unify is the cornerstone project of the CRP. It is delivering a cost-effective, enduring and self-sustainable corporate solution that reduces the recurrent costs of IT services and assets to EHP, whilst providing time and efficiencies savings to EHP customers. Both the CFP and the CAP have outcomes that will be enabled by Project Unify.

The CRP commenced on 7 February 2014. The cost and staff numbers for 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 are as follows:

Year	Capital	Operating	Total	Staff
2014 – 2015 Estimated Actual	\$2.000M	\$1.340M	\$3.340M	18
2015 -2016 Budget	\$3.340M	\$2.600M	\$5.940M	24
Total	\$5.34M	\$3.94M	\$9.28M	

- c) The CAP is in the early stages of development and as such, EHP is not in a position to provide a detailed breakdown of the proposed role of private certifiers and auditors. The project is investigating options for use of environmental auditors in providing reports to support applications and assess compliance and environmental harm under the EP Act. It is anticipated that the introduction of a certified auditor framework will support EHP in its regulatory activities by enabling it to target its own compliance workforce towards the highest risk environmental issues.

It will not lead to a reduction in departmental staff allocated to compliance.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

No. Non-Gov 4

asked on Wednesday, 29 July 2015

A NON-GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION AND MINISTER FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF (HON S MILES)—

QUESTION:

With reference to page 25 of the SDS for the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection and the allocation funding to reef water quality programs, will the Minister:

- a) Detail the amount of funding expended by his department for 2015-16 financial years under the \$175 million contribution to the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan 2009 initiated by the former Labor state and federal governments;
- b) List all projects funded under the plan in the 2012-13 and 2013-14 financial years, the individual cost of each project, its purpose and geographic location;
- c) Provide the number of staff working on projects under the plan in each of the 2012-13 and 2013-14 financial years;
- d) Detail the amount of funding expected to be expended by his department in 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 under the Government's \$175 million contribution to the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan 2013;
- e) List all projects expected to be funded under the plan, the projected individual cost of each project, its purpose and geographic location; and
- f) Provide the number of staff projected to be working on projects under the plan in each of the 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18?

ANSWER:

a) The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (EHP) is unable to provide details on the funding expended in 2015-2016 until the end of the financial year. However, EHP is expected to invest approximately \$15.8m in reef water quality initiatives in the 2015-16 financial year, contributing to the Government's annual \$35m commitment to reef water quality.

b) Projects within the reef water quality investments in the 2012-13, 2013-14 financial years are outside of the period covered by the Budget, forward estimates, and reporting of estimated actuals for FY 14-15.

c) Estimated staff working on projects under the Plan for 2012-13 and 2013-14 financial years are outside of the period covered by the Budget, forward estimates, and reporting of estimated actuals for FY 14-15.

d) The Government has committed to maintain the existing \$35m annual budget allocation to Reef initiatives. The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection will invest approximately \$15.8m in 2015-16. Details of projects in 'out years' can be confirmed prior to the beginning of financial years.

e) Projects within the reef water quality investments in the 2015-16 financial year are outlined below. Details of projects in 'out years' can be confirmed prior to the beginning of financial years.

Note – Some of the projects below have all of their funding allocated solely towards the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan (e.g. Reef Water Quality Program), whilst other broader projects only have part of their budget allocated to the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan (e.g. Queensland Wetlands Program).

Project, purpose and geographic location	2015-16 (\$m)	Solely Reef Plan or part of broader project
Reef Water Quality Program This program has been working with the sugarcane and grazing industries to help improve producers' land management practices, which in turn will improve water quality entering the reef. The program is operating in all Great Barrier Reef catchments, with an existing legislative emphasis in the Wet Tropics, Burdekin and Fitzroy catchments. The program includes building the evidence base and making information available to producers.	11.4	Solely Reef Plan
Regional waterway health report cards The Government is providing \$1.5 million in 2015/16 as the first year of a four-year commitment to support regional report cards in priority regions across reef catchments. This includes continuing to support the Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership and the Mackay-Whitsunday Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership and beginning to work with partners to develop a new report card for the Cairns/Wet Tropics region.	1.5	Solely Reef Plan
Coastal Planning The Coastal Management Plan provides non-regulatory policy to manage coastal areas. Coastal erosion and hazard mitigation advice is provided to coastal land managers, mostly coastal councils.	0.1	Part of broader project
Queensland Wetlands Program The program supports projects and programs that enhance how Queensland's wetlands, including those in the Great Barrier Reef catchment, are managed sustainably. Tools, data and information are shared on EHP's website <i>WetlandInfo</i> .	0.2	Part of broader project

Environmental values This activity aids land management by identifying and mapping local-scale environmental values, water quality objectives and aquatic ecosystems in key reef catchments and associated coastal waters. While covering all reef catchments there is particular focus on the Wet Tropics, Capricorn Curtis Coast, Mackay and Galilee Basin.	0.2	Part of broader project
Statutory Planning input Providing technical advice about EHP's interests in preparing planning and development instruments across the State.	0.1	Part of broader project
Climate Adaptation Program Investment in coastal hazard adaptation projects in 21 local government councils within the Great Barrier Reef catchment.	2.1	Part of broader project
Reef Water Quality offsets Establish a Queensland Environmental Offset Framework covering policy, guidelines and associated necessary legislative amendment. The investment identified is a part of the overall Offset Framework project.	0.1	Part of broader project
Reef Trust The Reef Trust, a new funding initiative to consolidate investments in the Great Barrier Reef, will deliver funds strategically to improve the Great Barrier Reef's health and resilience. It expands and complements existing Australian and Queensland Governments' programs. After the initial \$40 million investment by the Australian Government to Reef Trust, both Governments will pool funds received from offsets. EHP will help co-ordinate Reef Trust projects.	0.1	Part of broader project
TOTAL	\$15.8	

f) The number of staff working on projects under the plan in 2014-15 and 2015-16 are:

Project, purpose and geographic location	2014-15	2015-16
Reef Water Quality Program	16	18
Regional waterway health report cards	1.25	2
Coastal Planning	2	1
Queensland Wetlands Program	2.1	1.8
Environmental values	3	2
Statutory Planning input	1	1
Climate Adaptation Program	-	1
Reef Water Quality offsets	1	1
Reef Trust	1	1
TOTAL	25.35	29.8

Details of staff numbers in 'out years' can be confirmed prior to the beginning of financial years.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. Non-Gov 5

asked on Wednesday, 29 July 2015

A NON-GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION AND MINISTER FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF (HON S MILES)—

QUESTION:

With reference to page 3 of the SDS and the development of a new waste strategy, will the Minister provide;

- a) a breakdown of the running costs towards the Queensland Waste Data System
- b) a list of all staff working on waste management programs within EHP including their position title and geographic location?

ANSWER:

a) Breakdown of the running costs towards the Queensland Waste Data System

Queensland Waste Data System (QWDS)	
Running costs 2014 / 2015	
QWDS hosting & maintenance	\$77,334
Staff Expenses	\$227,996
Total	\$305,330
Notes:	
1) Staff expenses relate to period Jul 14 – Jun 15	
2) This was the first full year of operation for QWDS	
3) Staff expenses are an estimate of time dedicated to QWDS operation and maintenance. Resources were also dedicated to other projects.	
4) Hosting and maintenance includes \$2,694 of licenses and \$14,640 of system maintenance.	

b) List all staff working on waste management programs within EHP including their position title and geographic location?

Waste Management Programs – EHP Staff as at 05/08/2015		
Role	Number	Location
Manager	1	Brisbane
Team Leader	1	Brisbane
Senior Policy Officer	1	Brisbane
Manager	1	Brisbane
Team Leader	1	Brisbane
Senior Project Officer	1	Brisbane
Manager	1	Brisbane
Team Leader	1	Brisbane
Senior Project Officer	4	Brisbane
Project Officer	2	Brisbane
Project Support Officer	1	Brisbane
Compliance Delivery Manager	1	Robina
Principal Environmental Officer	1	Brisbane
Assistant Intelligence Analyst	1	Brisbane

- The staff expenses noted in section (a) only relate to the QWDS work component of the 3 QWDS Data and Reporting roles noted in (b) above.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. Non-Gov 6

asked on Wednesday, 29 July 2015

A NON-GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION AND MINISTER FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF (HON S MILES)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the variances numbered 1, 2 and 3 on page 25 of the SDS, can the Minister please explain the adjustments made, the reasons for the variations, when payments were received and the progress to date on the following projects:

- a) Koala Offsets Community Infrastructure program;
- b) CSG Remote Sensing Project;
- c) The Reef Trust;
- d) Raine Island Recovery project;
- e) The eReefs project;
- f) UCG investigations; and,
- g) The Reef Facts campaign?

ANSWER:

Variance explanations 1, 2, and 3 on page 25 refer to major revenue variations between the 2014-15 Budget and the 2014-15 Estimated Actual.

- a) Koala Offsets Community Infrastructure program;

Under the *State Government – Supported Community Infrastructure – Koala Conservation Policy* offsets are required to be provided by Queensland Government infrastructure developers who impact on priority koala habitat after they have attempted to avoid and then minimise those impacts. The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (EHP) continues its work in establishing and maintaining koala habitat with offset revenue received under this policy. The 2014-15 Budget included an estimate of \$0 for this program and the 2014-15 Estimated Actual included an estimate of \$374,189. This increase reflected additional revenue amounts of \$134,320 (dated 15/07/2014), \$37,720 (dated 17/10/2014), \$17,480 (dated 08/12/14), \$39,309 (dated 27/02/2015), \$10,120 (dated 23/03/2015), \$9,200 (dated 23/03/2015) and \$126,040 (dated 23/03/2015).

- b) CSG Remote Sensing Project;

Under this program EHP is working with the Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation to map the expansion of CSG activities using high

resolution satellite imagery and guide compliance priorities. The 2014-15 Budget included an estimate of \$0 for this program and the 2014-15 Estimated Actual included an estimate of \$100,000. This increase reflected an additional revenue amount of \$100,000 from the Commonwealth Government as a contribution towards the development of remote surveillance techniques (dated 18/07/2014).

c) The Reef Trust;

The 2014-15 Budget included an estimate of \$0 for this program and the 2014-15 Estimated Actual included an estimate of \$3 million in grant revenue for this program. This increase reflected an additional revenue amount of \$3 million received from the Commonwealth Government (\$1.5 million dated 09/02/2015 and \$1.5 million dated 21/04/2015). The funding has been moved to an interest bearing account with the Queensland Treasury Corporation and is drawn down for payments that are made to a grazing project that EHP is project managing on the Australian Government's behalf.

d) Raine Island Recovery project;

Raine Island is a vital green turtle breeding ground and sanctuary on the northern tip of the Great Barrier Reef. This project aims to save the island and turtle population from tidal inundation which kills newly laid eggs. Works have included beach engineering, sand replenishment and fencing. The 2014-15 Budget included an estimate of \$0 for this program and the 2014-15 Estimated Actual included an estimate of \$450,000. This increase reflected an additional revenue amount of \$400,000 from the Department of Natural Resources and Mines (dated 30/01/2015) and \$50,000 from the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing (dated 03/02/2015). The initial project is complete with the funding received fully expended on sand erosion control as well as turtle population surveys.

e) The eReefs project;

The eReefs project will provide critical water quality information for the Great Barrier Reef and inform future management and investment priorities. An additional \$2 million over two years (2015/16 and 2016/17) has been committed to the project to complete phase 2. The 2014-15 Budget included an estimate of \$0 in grant revenue for this program and the 2014-15 Estimated Actual included an estimate of \$0.5 million in grant revenue. This increase reflected an additional revenue amount of \$0.5 million, being the Department of the Premier and Cabinet contribution towards the State Government's \$1 million eReefs contribution in 2014-15. The full \$1 million amount was paid by EHP to the Great Barrier Reef Foundation (dated 25/06/2015). The eReefs project is well into phase 2, with modelling underway.

f) UCG investigations

EHP is continuing to investigate, evaluate and respond to environmental impacts in the Hopeland area. The 2014-15 Budget included an estimate of \$0 in appropriation revenue for this program and the 2014-15 Estimated Actual included an estimate of \$3.518 million in appropriation revenue for this program. This increase reflected an additional revenue amount of \$2.487 million being provided as a result of the 2014-15 Cabinet Budget Review Committee mid-year review of which an amount of

\$0.935 million was subsequently deferred to 2015-16. A further \$1.966 million in appropriation was provided in 2014-15 as part of the 2015-16 Budget process. These appropriation amounts were added to EHP's total appropriation allocation which is provided fortnightly throughout the financial year.

g) The Reef Facts campaign

This increase reflected an additional revenue amount of \$2.2 million in appropriation revenue and \$0.2 million in grant revenue being a contribution from the Department of Natural Resources and Mines. This additional appropriation funding was approved during the year and funded through additional sand dredging royalties received as a result of work being conducted on the second Brisbane Airport runway. The additional contribution from the Department of Natural Resources and Mines was received on 12/11/2014. The campaign has now concluded at a total cost of \$1.6 million over 2013-14 and 2014-15 with residual unspent funds reallocated. EHP continues to provide day to day communications about the health of the Great Barrier Reef and Government initiatives to improve its health and resilience.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. Non-Gov 7

asked on Wednesday, 29 July 2015

A NON-GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION AND MINISTER FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF (HON S MILES)—

QUESTION:

Would the Minister please explain the Balance Sheet variations between 2014 - 15 and 2015 - 16 Budget with reference to point 28 on page 26 of the SDS for the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection which reads:

28. Increase relates to outgoing land transfers to the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing not occurring as planned, plus additional acquisitions planned for 2015-16.

ANSWER:

The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection is the responsible agency for the acquisition of land for National Parks and land for the protection of koalas. When this land is ready for management as part of the protected estate it is then transferred to the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing.

The increase in the Property, Plant and Equipment balance between the 2014-15 Budget and the 2015-16 Budget totals \$15.4 million. This increase predominantly relates to combined acquisitions of \$28.7 million under the Investing in Our Environment program, Investing to Protect Our Koalas program and other land acquisitions offset by \$11.1 million of land transfers to the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing planned to occur in 2014-15. These land transfers did not proceed as funding had not been made available for the ongoing management of the land acquired.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. Non-Gov 8

asked on Wednesday, 29 July 2015

A NON-GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION AND MINISTER FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF (HON S MILES)—

QUESTION:

Point 15 on page 25 of the SDS refers to an expected increase in forecast bad debt, this is however linked to an increase in environmental licensing. Would the Minister please describe the increases in environmental licensing and why this would result in increased debt or doubtful debts?

ANSWER:

As per the 2014-15 Revenue Budget Measure (2014-15 Budget Paper No. 4, page 67), the former government approved the "increase of annual environmental license fees for higher risk resource industry related activities under the *Environmental Protection Regulation 2008*. These annual licence fees will increase by 50% each year over four years, commencing in 2014-15, to recover the regulatory costs associated with the administration and compliance of these activities. Application fees for site specific environmental authorities and fees for major amendments will also be increased".

Budget estimates in the 2015-16 SDS for "Losses on sale/revaluation of assets" reflect a combination of estimated bad debts and provisions for doubtful debts. A provision for doubtful debts is a contingency against the potential that a debt cannot be collected and needs to be written off. The provision is calculated as a percentage of aged debts outstanding. As revenue increases it is reasonable to expect the total value of the provision for bad debt to increase. The estimates in the 2014-15 Estimated Actual and 2015-16 Estimate reflect a conservative amount set aside to fund these potential expenses expressed as a percentage of the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection's (EHP) User charges and fees revenue. The 2014-15 Estimated Actual reflects 2.5% of user charges and fees with a projected reduction in percentage terms to 2.2% in 2015-16 as EHP continues to implement new strategies to improve debt management.

The majority of user charges and fees relates to environmental licencing fees (94% of the 2014-15 Estimated Actual). The increase from the 2014-15 Budget reflects that no allocation was originally set aside for a provision for doubtful debts. Budget increases to meet this expense were funded by additional revenue collected above the original target.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. Non-Gov 9

asked on Wednesday, 29 July 2015

A NON-GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION AND MINISTER FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF (HON S MILES)—

QUESTION:

Can the Minister outline how the government ensures communities are not adversely impacted by mine water discharges?

ANSWER:

Queensland's environmental laws regulate the mining industry, namely the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* (the Act) and subordinate legislation. The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (EHP) administers the provisions of the Act relevant to the regulation of mining activities.

All mines in Queensland must operate in accordance with the conditions of an environmental authority (a license to operate), which sets appropriate outcomes the environmental authority holder must meet in order to minimise environmental harm.

EHP recognises that contaminant releases from mines can pose a significant environmental risk, requiring close scrutiny and strict conditioning to limit environmental impacts. Authority to release contaminants to waters will only be given:

- when the operator can demonstrate that there are no viable alternative options that would result in a better environmental outcome;
- if the applicant has demonstrated that the release can be conducted in a manner that achieves the objectives of the Act; and
- under strict conditions limiting the environmental harm that may be caused to an acceptable level.

Environmental authority conditions related to contaminant releases are often site-specific, but typically include:

- limiting the type, quantity and concentration of contaminants that may be released;
- limiting contaminant releases to certain stream flow conditions (ie to provide for appropriate dilution and flushing);
- setting receiving waters contaminant trigger levels (exceedance of which requires further investigation) and limits to ensure water quality objectives are met; and

- monitoring and reporting requirements, including the requirement to notify of release events commencing and for exceedance of contaminant limits or trigger levels.

All monitoring programs required to be carried out under the Act, including results for monitoring required under an environmental authority, must be retained in EHP's register and made publically available upon request. EHP also undertakes regular proactive compliance monitoring of mines in Queensland, including the annual pre-wet season compliance inspection program.

In relation to Coal Mines in the Fitzroy Basin, an Enhanced Mine Water Release Pilot (the Pilot) was introduced in November 2012 to assess the impacts of modified release conditions across four mines, in an effort to improve the mine-affected water management issues impacting these mines.

Mine-affected water releases authorised by the Pilot are regulated to ensure they are undertaken in a manner which minimises any impacts on the receiving environment. Downstream water quality is a primary consideration.

An independent review of the initial Pilot found that releases had no material impact on water quality in the lower Fitzroy River and did not impact on drinking water supplies.

The Pilot was extended to other suitable coal mines during the 2013-14 wet season, and there are currently eight mines participating in the Pilot.

The Pilot will continue for the next 12 months so that additional monitoring data can be compiled and reviewed.

Information on mine water releases associated with the Pilot is publicly available at www.fitzroyriver.qld.gov.au/water-quality/recent-coal-mine-releases.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. Non-Gov 10

asked on Wednesday, 29 July 2015

A NON-GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION AND MINISTER FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF (HON S MILES)—

QUESTION:

What is the Queensland Government doing to report on the health of our waterways in the Mackay region and ensure there is baseline information for Abbot Point before dredging starts, and will the information be made publicly available?

ANSWER:

The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (EHP) together with 27 other partners from community, industry, agriculture, government, tourism and fishing initiated the development of the Mackay-Whitsunday Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership report card program (the report card). The report card is under development to report on the health of freshwater rivers, wetlands, estuaries, near shore coastal and marine environments as well as management efforts and outcomes. EHP provided \$50,000 seed funding in 2014/15 and is providing \$250,000 in 2015/16 as the first year of an ongoing contribution to the Mackay-Whitsunday Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership for programs including the report card.

The pilot report card due for launch in late 2015 will capture information for the Don, O'Connell, Proserpine, Pioneer and Plane basins and its near shore coastal; including Abbot Point; and marine environments. The report card will allow effective communication to the community about waterway health issues at a relevant scale through an annual regional report card as well as addressing what management actions are required to improve the health of waterways and marine areas across the region.

As part of the partnership and the development of the report card, partners are contributing a significant amount of data to build baseline reporting for the region from long-term monitoring programs including:

- the Paddock to Reef Integrated Monitoring, Modelling and Reporting Program;
- the Queensland Government's Estuarine Monitoring Program (done by the Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation);
- the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's Marine Monitoring Program which assesses the status and trends in water quality in the inshore waters and its impact on the health and resilience of coral and seagrass ecosystems; and
- the Australian Institute of Marine Science's Long-term Monitoring Program surveying the health of midshore and offshore reefs.

North Queensland Bulk Ports (NQBPs), a major partner in the Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership, has been undertaking baseline monitoring at Abbot Point from November 2011 across many physical chemical parameters for water quality, dissolved metals, chlorophyll-a and some pesticide monitoring through telemetered loggers in the marine waters in the vicinity of the port. This monitoring will continue into the future through an ambient monitoring program and captures not only port activities but also urban and source influences in the area. As part of James Cook University's Queensland Ports Seagrass Program, seagrass monitoring has also been undertaken in all NQBPs port sites since 2008 and will continue into the future.

The report card will also report on stewardship of the region's waterways by different industries, including ports, industry, tourism and agriculture.

Information from these multiple programs will be brought together and made publicly available through the Mackay-Whitsunday Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership Report Card.

*Answers to
Questions Taken on Notice*

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES HEARING QUESTION ON NOTICE NO. 1

asked on Friday, 21 August 2015

MR BENNETT ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION AND MINISTER FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF (HON DR S MILES)—

QUESTION:

Can DEHP advise the amount of surveillance by the department and any compliance activity that has been undertaken regarding land spraying of CSG-related material?

ANSWER:

EHP conducts proactive compliance activities over all CSG project areas based on a compliance prioritisation model. Additionally the department responds to notifications reported by companies and the public. Compliance checks conducted by EHP have not identified any noncompliance with conditions that relate to land spraying of CSG-related material.

In relation to CSG in 2014/15 the Department issued 38 formal warnings, 7 penalty infringement notices and 1 statutory order to CSG industry operators. In 2014/15 the Department conducted a total of 52 proactive and follow up inspections of CSG activities within targeted areas.

In addition to a dedicated Compliance Manager for CSG in Brisbane, there are teams in Toowoomba (14 full-time equivalent staff), Gladstone (10 full-time equivalent staff) and other centres (for example, Mackay – 9 full-time equivalent staff) who routinely perform CSG compliance work.

The department also requires high risk CSG activities to submit annual reports regarding their activities. In some cases additional monitoring and reporting obligations will be imposed on their CSG environmental authorities for site specific matters such as water releases or air emissions. Monitoring must be undertaken in accordance with relevant protocols or guidelines and in some cases reporting or monitoring results must be certified by an independent third party. There are offences for providing false and misleading information to the department.

Spraying diluted drilling muds to land has also been authorised on four CSG project areas operated by one company. This company initially undertook a trial of this activity from 2012-2015. In early 2015 the company approached EHP to amend their environmental authority and expand their activities. Subsequently the activities were approved in June and August 2015 following the detailed trial that included inspections by EHP officers and a detailed study by an independent third party consultant.

In January 2014, approval was also given for drilling fluid that is produced from the drilling of new gas wells to be sprayed onto land at one site. 'Drilling fluids' are not 'drilling muds' and do not include residual drilling material or restricted stimulation fluids. A compliance inspection at the relevant site was conducted by EHP in December 2014. No evidence of non-compliance was found at the time of the inspection.

High quality water, following reverse osmosis water treatment, is produced in association with many gas processing facilities across Queensland and this high quality water is provided under authorities issued by EHP for a variety of purposes for example irrigation and dust suppression.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES HEARING QUESTION ON NOTICE NO. 2

asked on Friday, 21 August 2015

MR BENNETT ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION AND MINISTER FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF (HON DR S MILES)—

QUESTION:

With reference to point 15 on page 25—it is referencing non-government question No. 8—Please provide further information on the losses on sales and re-evaluation of assets.

ANSWER:

Point 15 on page 25, refers to explanations of variances to the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection's (the department) controlled income statement in the 2015-16 SDS for "Losses on sale/revaluation of assets". The department's 2015-16 SDS estimate for "Losses on sale/revaluation of assets" reflects a combination of estimated bad debts and doubtful debts expense.

Outstanding debts are also known as "receivables" which are considered an asset of the department. Any write off or impairment of these assets is expensed and included in the "losses" category of the department's financial statements.

The 2015-16 estimate for "Losses on sale/revaluation of assets" was \$1,050,000 and included an estimate of \$300,000 for bad debts expense and an estimate of \$750,000 in expense for additional doubtful debts.

Actual bad debts expense in 2014-15 was \$401,900 and doubtful debts expense was \$273,194.

Debts are only written off if they are deemed irrecoverable and with approval by the appropriate financial delegate of the department. This can be for a number of reasons; the debtor could be in liquidation or administration; cannot be found; or the debt was issued in error. Debt can also be written off if debt collection activity has been unsuccessful to date and further expenditure through court or associated legal costs may be considered uneconomic compared to the size of the outstanding debt.

The department sets aside a provision for doubtful debts based on a percentage of aged debt. This is based on the assumption that the older a debt becomes the ability to successfully collect that debt diminishes. For example, the current formula is that a provision is held for 30% of debts aged between 91 and 365 days and 100% of debts aged over 12 months.

Therefore as the volume of user charges increases over time it is likely to expect that the provision will also be required to increase. The doubtful debts expense reflects the increase in the provision which is a contingency, but may not be required.

The department continues to implement new strategies to improve debt management including during 2014-15 the trial of third party debt collection agencies to selected classes of environmental licencing debt. This trial has been considered a success and third party debt collection agencies will be used more extensively by extending their use to a wider range of outstanding debtors and by referring to the third party debt collection agencies earlier. The department is also considering potential regulatory changes to allow earlier suspension of environmental licences if fees are not paid on time.