



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Quarantine

SPEECH

Wednesday, 26 November 2014

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

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Speaker	Fitzgibbon, Joel, MP	Question No.	

Mr FITZGIBBON (Hunter) (13:52): One thing that we in this place can all agree on is that because of demand in Asia Australian agriculture has a very bright future. Free trade agreements with Japan, South Korea and China are welcome and important, but market access issues will remain in place for some time and international competition will be intense. What gives Australia a competitive advantage more than anything else is our clean, green, safe image in global markets. My concern, though, is that the Abbott government has dropped the ball on biosecurity. It has done so by cutting departmental funding in the area of quarantine. It has done so by cutting important CSIRO research funding which goes to research into quarantine. It has done so by delaying quarantine reforms introduced by the former Labor government—14 months on from the election and there is still no bill back in the parliament. It has done so by threatening to take biosecurity out of the Department of Agriculture and putting it into some new super department, which would be a disaster for our clean, green, safe image.

Very quickly, I will talk about drought. On the ABC last night Minister Joyce excused himself for failing to act on SPC by saying he was busy working on a drought package, a package for which Victorian farmers are not eligible. I am sure the member for Gippsland, who is at the table, has an interest in that. (*Time expired*)