



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

BILLS

Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2012-2013

Consideration in Detail

SPEECH

Wednesday, 30 May 2012

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

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Questioner
Speaker Cobb, John, MP

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Mr JOHN COBB (Calare) (16:06): Thank you, Deputy Speaker, I appreciate your forbearance. As the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry in his opening did stress the issues of quarantine and risk et cetera to a large degree, as well he might, I have some questions in that regard. First, the new quarantine station, which will take the place of five current quarantine stations in Melbourne, Sydney and Perth in particular, will mean that industry has to come to the one spot. Has a cost analysis been done on what that will mean to industry to have to confine itself to one spot? This is a big country, and it is a long way from Perth to Sydney.

Second, the Cocos-Keeling Islands held our offshore quarantine centre. Could the minister tell us whether his department still owns the old quarantine station or whether another department does? I am wondering if the minister is hearing me. Does the department of agriculture still own the deeds or the title to the old quarantine station on Cocos Island?

Third, why has the \$7.8 million for the centre of excellence, which is the front piece for the government's quarantine and risk assessments, been put off being spent until 1 July 2013? Is that simply a budget measure to help the Treasurer meet his surplus requirements for the year 2012-13?

Fourth, the government is currently looking at bringing an amendment to the APVMA legislation, amongst which the government seems to be concentrating on having an automatic renewal process whereby all those chemicals which come under it have to be within a certain time—between five and 15 years—automatically reprocessed by the company that owns each chemical. I hope the government does realise that there are a lot of chemicals which are not high volume but are of high importance. Once companies realise they have to go through an extraordinarily lengthy, involved and expensive process, they may not see it as worth their while to do so, even though these chemicals in all likelihood have caused no ripples and are not likely to cause any problems in the process. What this means in the stock or the plant field is that we may be denied these chemicals in the future simply because the companies involved do not see it as worth their while to go through that reregistration process. I think that pretty much covers the ones I am concerned with at the moment.