

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTIONS

Senator PAYNE (New South Wales) (4.04 pm)—I move:

That the Senate—

- (a) notes and agrees with the comments of the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Mr Burke) when he called for all governments to refocus on agricultural research and development so as to boost agricultural productivity;
- (b) condemns:
 - (i) the New South Wales Labor Government for eroding agricultural research and development institutions like Hurlstone Agricultural High School and the Glen Innes Research and Advisory Station, and
 - (ii) the Federal Government's decision to axe funding to various Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation agricultural research institutions, such as JM Rendel Laboratory for livestock research in Rockhampton, Queensland, and the plant research laboratory in Merbein, Victoria; and
- (c) calls on the Federal Government to intervene and prevent the destruction of these institutions and to save the future of the Australian agricultural research and development sector.

Question agreed to.

TRAVESTON CROSSING DAM

Senator IAN MACDONALD (Queensland) (4.04 pm)—I refer to general business notice of motion No. 299, standing in my name. I indicate that I am also moving this motion on behalf of Senator Russell Trood, a Queensland colleague who has taken a great interest in this subject. The motion relates to the Traveston Crossing Dam, and I ask that it be taken as a formal motion.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT—Is there any objection to this motion being taken as formal?

Senator Bob Brown—I have no objection, but may I just associate the Greens with wholehearted support of the motion that is to be moved by Senators Macdonald and Trood.

Senator LUDWIG (Queensland—Minister for Human Services) (4.05 pm)—by leave—The Australian government is aware of the decision, announced yesterday by the Queensland government, to delay submitting the Traveston Dam assessment report to the Australian government so that additional environmental mitigation measures can be fully investigated. The Australian government acknowledges the rigorous consideration being undertaken of the potential environmental impacts of that project and notes that Queensland's decision was made in the context of ongoing communication with the Australian government with regard to the potential impacts of the proposed dam on matters of national environmental significance.

It is entirely a matter for Queensland whether and, if so, at what time it wishes to proceed with the Traveston Dam proposal. If Queensland decides to proceed with the proposed Traveston Dam and submits a formal assessment report to the Australian government, that proposal will be assessed and a final decision will be made on the project rigorously, transparently and in strict accordance with the provisions of the objects of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

Senator IAN MACDONALD (Queensland) (4.06 pm)—I assume Senator Ludwig was indicating that he is going to support the motion, so I move the motion standing in my name and in the name of Senator Trood:

That the Senate—

- (a) notes the backflip of the Queensland Government in deferring the construction of the Traveston Crossing Dam; and

- (b) calls on the Queensland Government to remove the social threat to people living in the Mary Valley and to ensure protection of the Mary River cod, Mary River turtle and the Australian lungfish, by permanently shelving the proposal to construct the Traveston Crossing Dam.

Question agreed to.

CYPRUS

Senator XENOPHON (South Australia) (4.07 pm)—I move:

That the Senate—

- (a) notes the role of the United Nations (UN) Special Envoy for Cyprus, the Honourable Alexander Downer, to achieve a just and lasting solution to the Cyprus problem; and
- (b) urges the Australian Government to continue its support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus, and for a just and lasting solution to be achieved in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions on Cyprus which embody the principles enshrined in international and European Union law and norms.

Question agreed to.

GROCERYCHOICE

Senator BARNETT (Tasmania) (4.07 pm)—I, and also on behalf of Senator Fisher, move:

That the Senate—

- (a) notes the Government’s GROCERYchoice website is:
 - (i) not delivering any valuable information to consumers with website hits suffering a massive reduction from more than 3 million hits per month on commencement to 104 000 hits in October 2008 and only 54 608 on the last report,
 - (ii) unable to produce a specific cost of a specific grocery item at a specific supermarket, and in some cases compares

supermarkets several hundred kilometres apart,

- (iii) damaging to the best interests of independent supermarket retailers,
- (iv) wasting \$13 million of taxpayers’ funds, and
- (v) fundamentally flawed and unable to be improved or upgraded so as to provide any consumer benefit or adequate return on taxpayer funds, irrespective of whether the website is managed and operated by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission or the consumer organisation Choice; and
- (b) calls on the Government to close the website down immediately.

Question put.

The Senate divided. [4.12 pm]

(The President—Senator the Hon. JJ Hogg)

Ayes.....	32
Noes.....	32
Majority.....	0

AYES

Abetz, E.	Barnett, G.
Bernardi, C.	Birmingham, S.
Boswell, R.L.D.	Boyce, S.
Brandis, G.H.	Bushby, D.C.
Cash, M.C.	Colbeck, R.
Coonan, H.L.	Cormann, M.H.P.
Ferguson, A.B.	Fielding, S.
Fierravanti-Wells, C.	Fifield, M.P.
Fisher, M.J.	Heffernan, W.
Humphries, G.	Johnston, D.
Joyce, B.	Kroger, H.
Macdonald, I.	Mason, B.J.
McGauran, J.J.J.	Nash, F.
Parry, S.	Payne, M.A.
Ryan, S.M.	Troeth, J.M.
Trood, R.B.	Williams, J.R.

NOES

Arbib, M.V.	Bilyk, C.L.
Bishop, T.M.	Brown, B.J.
Brown, C.L.	Cameron, D.N.
Collins, J.	Crossin, P.M.