



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

**Cotton Industry**

**QUESTION**

**Wednesday, 1 March 2017**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## QUESTION

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<b>Questioner</b>	Littleproud, David, MP	<b>Responder</b>	Joyce, Barnaby, MP
<b>Speaker</b>		<b>Question No.</b>	

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### Cotton Industry

Cotton Industry

**Mr LITTLEPROUD** (Maranoa) (14:29): My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources. Will the Deputy Prime Minister outline to the House the significant contribution Australia's cotton industry makes to the Australian economy? Is the Deputy Prime Minister aware of any threats to this industry and the thousands of hardworking Australians it employs, including those on 141 cotton farms in my electorate of Maranoa?

**Mr JOYCE** (New England—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources) (14:30): I thank the honourable member for his question and—

**Mr Hill interjecting**—

The SPEAKER: The member for Bruce will leave under 94(a).

**Mr JOYCE:** note the work that he has done in the agricultural sector and the work he has done in the cotton industry, especially in his time in banking in South-East Queensland. South-East Queensland is responsible for about a third of the nation's cotton crop. It is a massive employer in that area. One of the big threats, of course, is—

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Prime Minister will resume his seat. The member for Bruce has been asked to leave. He will leave immediately, or I will name him. You have been ejected a number of times now. You should know how to pack up quicker.

*The member for Bruce then left the chamber.*

**Mr JOYCE:** It is a great day for agriculture when we see the December figures come out and quite clearly show the capabilities and competence of this side of the House—of this government. When we look at agriculture, forestry and fishing, just listen to these numbers. For the trend for September 2016 to December 2016: a 7.4 per cent trend for the percentage change. For December 2015 to December 2016: 20.4 per cent. Seasonally adjusted, the percentage change, September 2016 to December 2016: 8.3 per cent growth.

**Ms Plibersek interjecting**—

The SPEAKER: The member for Sydney!

**Mr JOYCE:** Seasonally adjusted percentage change, December 2015 to December 2016—wait for it: 23.7 per cent growth. Those sorts of numbers are changing the whole dynamics of regional Australia—those sorts of numbers in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector. It means that one of the major banks comes into our office—in the last fortnight—and says that they have had the biggest payoff in rural debt in their history. This is what is happening under a competent government.

This is backed in by issues such as the dog fences. You might say, 'Why is that important?' Call people such as those who live at Bollon or Cunnamulla as we roll out thousands of kilometres of fences. Supported by this government, one of the biggest turnarounds in this quarter has been wool and sheepmeat. We have seen the price of wool go to record prices for about the last 30 years. This is a change around.

We hear the deriding comments by the Labor Party that our agricultural policy is a thought bubble. Well, it is a thought bubble with record outcomes and record returns for this nation. It is the essence of what a competent government does. It brings a better return back through the farm gate. That is precisely what we are doing. That

is precisely what is happening. That is why we talk about record cattle prices, record meat sheep prices, a record back in wool prices. Everything is turning around. That is why we can go to the seat of Parkes and see, with the tax deductibility that we brought in on grain sheds, new grain sheds going up, new fences going up and new water infrastructure going in—a 100 per cent write-off on water infrastructure; a 100 per cent write-off on fencing; a write-off over three years for grains; the instant asset write-off. This is the sort of turnaround. This is how competency looks. Competency looks like this. This is what competency looks like. And what did you ever provide for agriculture? What can you put your hand to? You were a total and utter failure. We have a record result.