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## MEDIA RELEASE

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**Date: Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2010**

**For immediate release**

### **Questions raised over Papaya quarantine breach**

QUESTIONS were raised in State Parliament this morning over a serious quarantine breach that may have allowed Papaya seedlings infected with Papaya ring spot virus to be sent from New South Wales to North Queensland.

LNP Member for Hinchinbrook Andrew Cripps said questions were put the Minister Tim Mulherin asking him to advise why, more than four months after he was contacted by Papaya Australia, he had failed to respond to complaints about possible breaches of quarantine concerning the south east Queensland papaya ring spot virus quarantine zone.

“It’s unbelievable that seedlings would be allowed through. If they have been allowed through then it’s been a serious breach of quarantine and the Minister needs to explain why more than four months after being contacted by industry leaders, he has failed to respond ...what he is trying to cover-up?,” Mr Cripps said.

Mr Cripps said he very concerned the Minister had no idea of the issue and had to call on staff for details before admitting that he hadn’t responded to the industry body Papaya Australia over its concerns.

“What’s the point in having a Papaya ring spot virus quarantine areas in southeast Queensland if infected plants from outside the area are able to travel through and infect growing districts in North and Central Queensland?”

Mr Cripps said the highly destructive virus was spread from plant to plant by aphids and also by the movement infected plants and seedlings. Once infected, plants cannot be cured by spraying with pesticides or removing plant parts showing symptoms and all plants had to be destroyed.

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