



Speech by

Andrew Cripps

MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

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COOPERATIVE RESEARCH CENTRES

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (3.33 pm): I rise to express my concern about the decision by the Gillard government not to continue funding for several important cooperative research centres pursuing issues critical to agriculture and regional communities in Queensland. The federal Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, Senator Kim Carr, in announcing the 14th selection round for CRC funding, has determined that support for the cooperative research centres for cotton, regional innovation, forestry, beef genetic technologies and telehealth and telecare will be discontinued. The withdrawal of this funding will hurt Australia's agricultural research sector at a time when improved productivity is critical for profitability, when we face a serious food security challenge and when government water resource policies are demanding more innovation than ever.

This decision does not make sense if we are indeed seeking a sustainable future for agriculture in Australia. When one considers the progress achieved by the cotton and beef CRCs over the last decade and the need for the forestry CRC to deliver continued improvements in this resource industry, when one considers the importance of the regional innovation CRC to deliver sustainable growth to regional communities across Australia and when one considers how vital the work of the telehealth and telecare CRC is to the delivery of health and social services to regional and rural Australia, I really cannot understand the decision of the Gillard government to cut the funding to these research bodies.

I would note that Professor Tony Peacock, the CEO of the CRC Association of Australia, has been reported as saying that the overall funding pool available to the CRC program had shrunk from over \$200 million a year in 2007, when the Rudd government was first elected, to just \$165 million in the current year, under the Gillard government. I call on the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economies here in Queensland to stand up to his federal Labor colleagues and demand that research for agriculture and regional communities is properly funded.

(Time expired)