




Speech By  
**Julianne Gilbert**

**MEMBER FOR MACKAY**

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Record of Proceedings, 10 November 2016

**MOTION: MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES**

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (6.16 pm): It gives me great pleasure to speak against the motion moved by the member for Burdekin. The Palaszczuk government has a strong record in supporting regional communities. I understand what the member for Warrego was saying when she said that she was upset—

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. I apologise, member for Mackay. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, you are now warned under standing order 253A. Your interjections, in my view, seem to be designed to disrupt the speaker. They are disorderly. If you persist, I will take the appropriate action.

**Mrs GILBERT:** As I was saying, I certainly understand the member for Warrego's frustration with the lack of infrastructure in the regions. My community was very frustrated over the three years of the Newman government where we got nothing built in our region by that government, yet we see that building across the road in William Street. I certainly understand where she is coming from.

Today I was able to reflect on the record of Ministers Byrne and Donaldson. They were very successful ministers, so I can certainly understand why those opposite are so keen to see another agriculture minister because they will be excited to see how we are going to continue on with the great record that we already have. In October last year we saw the official commencement of the operation of the three-year collaborative arrangements with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. This agreement saw the establishment of the Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance in conjunction with industry. Industry and government are working together in a model for getting industry intelligence that can, among other things, provide clear identification of workforce supply gaps and best value for money of investment opportunities for training and skills expenditure. The Palaszczuk government has successfully established three net-free fishing zones in North Queensland and Central Queensland.

I am pleased to say that I had the opportunity to take the Premier and the Minister for Tourism to Cape Hillsborough when they were recently visiting Mackay. Cape Hillsborough is located in the net-free zone north of Mackay. During our visit, Ben Atherton reported on the early success of the net-free zone. This year, the area has seen approximately one-third additional turtles breeding on the surrounding beaches, dolphins have returned in the seas off the beaches, and there is good news for our dugong: the seagrasses have started to renew and thicken.

The Palaszczuk government has overseen the implementation of the memorandum of understanding between the Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges and Central Queensland University for the delivery of skill based training for the agricultural sector. The Palaszczuk government has overseen the establishment of the Animal Welfare Advisory Board. In early August, this board met for the first time.

We are all aware of the ongoing drought that Queensland is experiencing, with up to 80 per cent of our state drought declared. The Palaszczuk government is supporting the continuation of existing drought relief. In fact, as per our election commitment, arrangements are in place until 2018. If useful rain does not fall, these arrangements will be reviewed. The DRAS is assisting people on the land through monetary payments and relief measures, including financial counselling, mental health services, relief from electricity charges, the waiving of annual water licence fees and land rates rebates. There has also been a \$4 million community assistance package to help affected communities. The Palaszczuk government is supporting rural producers through these times of drought and natural disasters. When the drought ends, we want to see farmers emerge stronger and able to capitalise on opportunities that lie at their doorstep. It is this government's intention to have an industry that is both profitable and sustainable in the long term. That is why we are investing in measures to combat wild dogs.

It is also important for our rural producers to continue to develop new markets and trade opportunities. The Palaszczuk government has committed to trade initiatives to ensure that our food and fibre producers have new sources for markets. Our trade missions have been a great success. Minister Byrne has been to China. He has forged relationships with China and created new business opportunities for the beef industry. The government has developed relationships with investors in Queensland who both want to export and import.

*(Time expired)*