



Speech By  
**Lachlan Millar**


**MEMBER FOR GREGORY**

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Record of Proceedings, 18 August 2016

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

**Battle of Long Tan, 50th Anniversary; Palaszczuk Labor Government, Wild Dog Fencing**

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (2.36 pm): I, too, acknowledge Vietnam Veterans Day and certainly pay my respects to those people who went to Vietnam and who have come home. It is a significant day in Western Queensland in Longreach and Emerald where they are remembering today.

Many members will have heard of the recent widespread rain in Western Queensland. It has been a great relief after four years of extreme drought. The psychological boost of seeing green after so many years is wonderful. However, members should be very clear that the drought has not broken. We need follow-up falls in spring and summer. We are still in drought and the effects of the extended drought have not dissipated and we still need help.

One thing that this government can do right now is hurry up and deliver the promised \$5 million in extra funding for wild dog check fencing. When this was announced with such fanfare in Barcardine on May Day I thought it was timely. The initial grant to the Central Western Queensland Remote Area Planning and Development Board had been totally oversubscribed. RAPAD received 36 eligible applications by landholders wanting to protect their properties against wild dogs. Unfortunately, RAPAD only had funds for 17 cluster fences. When the May Day boost was announced I thought that if even half of that \$5 million could be applied to those eligible applications we would see fast, efficient results in the seat of Gregory.

After May Day nothing has happened. RAPAD could wait no longer and on 13 June it announced the 17 successful applicants. With increasing frustration, on 21 June I made formal representations to the Premier and the agriculture minister, Minister Donaldson, to try and get funds flowing. At the end of July I received a response from the Premier assuring me her wild dog fencing commissioners would meet early in the new financial year to determine how that extra \$5 million should be used. I sincerely congratulate landholders for every kilometre of fencing they construct. This fencing is our chance to re-establish one of Queensland's great industries—the western sheep and wool industry. I also want to pay tribute to the former minister for natural resources, Andrew Cripps, who was the instigator of cluster fencing in the south-west and has had great results, with lambing now in those areas going from 20 per cent to over 98 per cent.

For the fencing to work, the industry needs to reach a critical mass. If RAPAD could subsidise an extra 10 cluster fences, it would have a significant impact in the district. It is estimated that these additional fences would bring an extra 135,000 sheep back into the district. That would create more than \$1.6 million in shearing, crutching and lamb-marking wages for the region. What better way to directly address the government's stated goal of job creation in regional Queensland? I respectfully ask that the government urgently allocate that money to RAPAD soon.