



Speech By  
**Hon. Mark Furner**


**MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE**

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Record of Proceedings, 17 May 2018

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Drought Declarations**

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (10.07 am): I have been fortunate to be the agriculture minister for just over six months. With the backing of the Premier I have been fortunate to travel extensively around the state, sitting down with producers and having conversations with them. The one thing that has struck me above all else from those conversations has been the resilience, the decency and also the courage of these people of the land when faced with difficult weather conditions.

As Queensland enters the sixth year of the current drought, I am pleased to announce that summer rains have helped decrease the state's drought-declared area from 66 per cent to 57 per cent. At the peak of the drought in March last year, 88 per cent of Queensland was drought declared. I have accepted the recommendations of the local drought committees to revoke or partially revoke the following areas following good summer rainfall: the western portion of the Banana Shire Council, Bundaberg Regional Council, Burdekin Shire Council, the northern part of the Charters Towers Regional Council, Fraser Coast Regional Council, Gympie Regional Council, North Burnett Regional Council, Tablelands Regional Council, Townsville City Council, the declared portion of the Mareeba Shire Council and the Western Downs Regional Council.

Unfortunately, not all of Queensland has had welcome rain. During the past 12 months we have also seen dry parts of the Southern Downs region and Lockyer council areas, which is unfortunate as better conditions the previous summer had allowed the Southern Downs drought declaration to be revoked. I have accepted the local drought committee's recommendations to drought declare both of these council areas as well.

Queensland has one of the world's most demanding environments in which to undertake agriculture, and we want to help producers maximise good conditions and better manage their resilience when times are tough. The Queensland Drought Assistance Package offers a wide range of in-drought business, family and community support. We have also invested in the \$17.5 million Drought and Climate Adaptation Program, bringing together the best climate scientists, climate advisers and cutting-edge researchers to help producers better manage drought and climate impacts. I look forward to travelling to Mackay and again talking to producers. Hopefully we will see more rain in rural and regional Queensland.