




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

Record of Proceedings, 13 June 2018

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Budget, Agriculture and Fisheries

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (10.01 am): The Palaszczuk Labor government continues to deliver for the agriculture sector in this state. We are committed to ensuring that the sector has the assistance it needs to thrive. We will continue our support for the construction of cluster fencing. Five million dollars in additional funds will support Western Queensland tackle the wild dog menace by adding to the nearly 7,000 kilometres of cluster fencing already constructed. This is in addition to the continued support from QRIDA which assists producers through Primary Industry Productivity Enhancement Scheme loans. Having regularly visited Western Queensland, I am well aware of the—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members to my left, the minister is not taking your interjections and I do not believe they are helpful.

Mr FURNER: Having regularly visited Western Queensland, I am well aware of the impact the drought continues to have on primary producers across Queensland. Although over 57 per cent of the state is drought declared, this is a reduction from the peak of over 88 per cent last year. Notwithstanding the recent rain that took some areas out of the drought, the Drought Relief Assistance Scheme will remain at \$20 million. This will assist producers with fodder and water freight subsidies up to 50 per cent for livestock and will work in addition to the 50 per cent Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate. The Palaszczuk government is also delivering on our election commitment of \$10 million over three years for the delivery of rural economic development grants. I will announce the guidelines and open applications for the grants later this year.

In good news for the industry, the government will continue to support the Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance, coupled with the Queensland Agriculture Workforce Network, with \$3 million over three years. The alliance brings together QFF, Growcom, AgForce, Canegrowers and Cotton Australia. The agriculture twittersphere was abuzz yesterday with industry groups pleased that these programs will continue to be funded. I also know that many regions will be happy to know that the program will continue. Bundaberg fruit and veggie growers will be in line, with up to \$400,000 over two years to help manage fruit flies and trials to collect further agricultural data within the region. Having been on a property in Bundaberg last Saturday with a growers' group, I know that a lot of growers will be excited with this project.

The government will continue to support the implementation of the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy. An upgraded recreational fishing app and new commercial fishing app will also be funded this year as well as finalisation of the funds to support net-free zones in Cairns, Mackay and Rockhampton. Yesterday's budget continues the work of stabilising the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and rebuilding the capacity of the department in the areas of biosecurity and fisheries. The Palaszczuk Labor government continues to deliver for agriculture in Queensland.