




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Drought Declarations

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (9.52 am): As the Premier mentioned earlier, currently more than half of Queensland is in drought, with many primary producers experiencing their sixth year without rain. The Queensland Drought Appeal, which the Premier and I launched at this year's Ekka, continues to go from strength to strength and will again be brought to the fore with a TV special to be aired on Channel 7 on Saturday, 1 September. I encourage everyone to dig deep for our farmers who might be doing it tough during this dry period.

Producers who are not in a drought-declared council can still apply for an individually droughted property declaration, which gives the same access as if their farm was in a shire that was drought declared. It is a very simple process that is as easy as filling in this simple four-page form, which I table for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, titled 'Application for an Individually Droughted Property (IDP) declaration' [\[1181\]](#).

While we work to assist farmers through the drought, scurrilous misinformation has been spread about this issue. It is disappointing that, for such a serious issue, there is a lack of understanding on how the drought declaration process works from those opposite. The process for making or revoking declarations dates back to 1982. As minister, I take advice from the local drought committees. The LDCs meet at least once a year, generally at the end of the summer rainfall period, to assess seasonal conditions and make their recommendations about the drought status of their areas. The LDCs can also decide to meet at other times of the year, if necessary. I do not declare or revoke areas without first receiving the recommendation of the responsible LDC.

For people to try to play politics with drought declarations and revocations is disingenuous and not helpful to local farmers. There is an established process that is free of political interference and it should be kept that way.

Landholders can also legally harvest regulated native vegetation for stock fodder under the accepted development code for managing fodder harvesting. Landholders simply complete the notification online or in hard copy form, wait to receive acknowledgment from the department and undertake harvesting as per the provisions of the code.

As minister, it is my job to ensure that producers in Queensland get a fair go. It is also important to ensure that long-term plans are made for dry conditions. That is the most effective way that producers can prepare for drought and other downturns into the future.