




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

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ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (12.33 pm): Firstly, I congratulate the Premier and all new and returned members on their successful election as members of the 56th Parliament. I acknowledge the Jagera and Turrbal people and their elders both past and present. I honour the memory of the Indigenous people who walked these lands for thousands of years, acknowledge the current day Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and encourage our Indigenous youth to a brighter future. In doing so, I recognise and congratulate the member for Cook as the first Torres Strait Islander in this place. Hopefully there will be many more to follow as our rich cultural society and our views in this state mature.

It was with a somewhat heavy heart that I left my portfolios of Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships behind. I met many good people and was starting to make headway on reforms to long-held injustices in those areas. I have no doubt that those ministries are in good hands with the Deputy Premier and the member for Sandgate.

I have sunk my teeth into my new portfolio of Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries with relish and have travelled thousands of kilometres across the state already, meeting with farmers and industry groups to listen to their concerns and compliments. As someone who has travelled the breadth of the most decentralised state in our nation throughout my various careers, I once again enjoy the engagement with those men and women in the regions—men and women who are so resilient, genuine and down to earth. I look forward to continuing the good work of the Palaszczuk government in this area. With a terrific team behind me, I believe the future is very bright for this \$20 billion industry. Furthermore, I believe the portfolio should be treated with the respect and bipartisanship it deserves. I look forward to the collaboration of all members of the House.

I thank the electors of Ferny Grove for placing their trust in me for a second term. As I did in the last term, I will continue to support their aspirations, hopes and dreams. I also acknowledge the tremendous support of the volunteers in the Ferny Grove electorate who worked so hard to return a majority Palaszczuk Labor government to Queensland.

I am extremely thankful to everyone who volunteered and supported my re-election in 2017—the local ALP members, my office staff, Laurence and his son, Will, Ross, Clare, Daniel, Christine and Cindy. Some of those people are no longer with me. They have moved on to brighter futures. I am thankful to the party office, in particular Julie-Ann Campbell, the state secretary, and Sarah Mawhinney, the assistant state secretary. They are two fantastic women who are leading our party into the future. I am also thankful to the union movement, in particular Chris Gazenbeek from the SDA, Neil Henderson from the Services Union, Peter Biagini from the Transport Workers Union, John Oliver from the United Firefighters Union Queensland—to name a few—and my fellow caucus members in the first Palaszczuk government.

Many of those who volunteered are life-long members of the Labor Party—party members whose efforts have done so much to create the modern, progressive state of Queensland we live in today. Queensland today is not the state it was when I was growing up. It is the Labor Party that can claim the lion's share of those reforms—reforms which have made Queensland the prosperous, forward-looking state it is today.

Perhaps even more importantly, I am grateful to the many people who volunteered their time on the Labor campaign. Those who volunteered their time to stand by A-frames, make phone calls, do letterbox drops, hand out how-to-vote cards, staff the pre-poll booth and had conversations with their friends and neighbours did this simply because they believe they should participate in the political process. There were also those who were not party members but were simply concerned community members with no political affiliation whatsoever. For example, residents from Peterson Road, Samford—a part of my electorate that I lost to Pine Rivers—expressed concerns over a bike path which was earmarked to go through their property the week before Christmas 2016. Minister Bailey and I walked their properties before ruling that proposal out. They volunteered on my campaign.

My very good friend Mark Orreal, the president of the Samford RSL Sub Branch, volunteered. Unfortunately, Mark was immediately scurrilously labelled while volunteering on the Ferny Grove pre-poll booth by the LNP once they learned of his position. This gutless, unprovoked attack for merely exercising his democratic right to support me once again brought home to me the clear values which separate those opposite from Labor. Their born-to-rule arrogance was alive and prevalent and on display for all to see. Concerned about his continued involvement, I approached Mark and asked him whether he was okay. His response satisfied my concerns. He said, 'I've fought the Taliban; these amateurs are nothing.'

There are some who say we live in an age where people are cynical and do not have any faith in their institutions or elected members. There seems to be a growing narrative that declares it is what people say on social media that matters more than what they do. I can inform the House that, in Ferny Grove at least, this is not true. The people who volunteered on my campaign experienced what life was like under an LNP government and overwhelmingly gave their time and money to ensure the gains we have made for Queenslanders were not lost again.

I stand here today quite humbled by the efforts of our volunteers who worked on the Ferny Grove Labor campaign because they believe it matters who is in government and what their elected member stands for. During the LNP's single term of government many front-line services were cut and record numbers of electors in Ferny Grove lost their jobs. We had a lot of work to do to fix the damage, and the job is not done yet.

Last term we restored front-line services in our local schools and emergency and health services. I was able to secure funding to extend the 367 bus route in Upper Kedron and for Transport and Main Roads to conduct the first comprehensive traffic flow study on Samford Road in decades. Additionally, secure funding for the construction of a transit orientated development will provide hundreds of extra commuter car parks, along with hundreds of local employment opportunities at this development both during the build and on completion of the Ferny Grove Railway Station.

In this term of government, we will deliver even more. The Mitchelton and Ferny Grove state high schools will see more than a \$20 million investment, and we will seal the overflow car park at Grovely State School. I place on record my appreciation to the previous education minister and the current minister. Local sporting fields in the heart of Ferny Grove will see the installation of our first ever dedicated women's change room facility. Today, Ferny Grove is moving again thanks to the responsible judgements of a progressive and stable Labor team. I am proud to be part of a majority Palaszczuk Labor government—a government which believes that public service and participation in the political process is vitally important for the future and prosperity of our state.

I would like to place on record my gratitude and admiration of the Premier and the role she took in my campaign. On a rainy Sunday at the Ferny Grove Bowls Club, the Premier came to a well-attended morning tea to help launch my campaign. It was fantastic to have the Premier there, and I know all of those who went were able to stop and chat, get a photo with her and ask her their burning questions. It was her personality and genuineness that resonated with Queenslanders and went part of the way to ensuring the re-election of the Palaszczuk Labor government.

I would like to thank the people of Samford and districts for the privilege of having been their member for the past three years. Samford and districts were lost to the Pine Rivers electorate in the 2017 redistribution. I had a great time supporting many community groups in Samford and made some great friends in that part of the world which I will take forward with me, even though the area is no longer part of my electorate. I am looking forward to building those same sorts of relationships in Mitchelton,

Enoggera and Ashgrove as this term progresses. I acknowledge the legacy of the former member for Ashgrove, now member for Cooper, and look forward to building on those longstanding relationships she had with her constituents.

Last but most certainly not least, I would like to thank my family. To my wife, Lorraine; my children—Troy, Stacey and Sally; Troy's wife, Daniella; and my beautiful grandchildren, Marley and Xavia: I say thank you for your continued support and for standing by me. I love you and I would not be standing here today without you.