



Speech By  
**Hon. Mark Furner**


**MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE**

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Record of Proceedings, 14 November 2018

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance; Agricultural Workforce Network**

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (9.57 am): I am pleased to report that regional employment will be further strengthened with the Queensland government locking in agreements with the Queensland Farmers' Federation and five other industry organisations to continue the Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance and the Queensland Agricultural Workforce Network. We have committed \$3 million in the state budget over the next three years to keep these programs active. They have already helped to facilitate hundreds of job and training outcomes.

The Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance and the Queensland Agricultural Workforce Network initiatives were developed in conjunction with Queensland's peak bodies to help agribusinesses attract, develop and retain skilled workers. Coordinated by the QFF, the Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance brings together multiple agricultural industry stakeholders to deliver a collective approach to workforce planning and development, skills and education. The Queensland Agricultural Workforce Network comprises six regionally based agricultural workforce officers employed by industry bodies. They work with farmers, industry groups and supply chain businesses to address recruitment and skilling needs. These workforce officers support producers and related businesses across all sectors—from beef to bananas, sugar to sheep, agronomy to irrigation. In the first two years of operation they have made contact with more than 8,000 farm business owners and employees and more than 6,000 potential new employees.

These workforce officers have also influenced more than 1,300 positive employment and training outcomes and the continuation of the RJSA and the QAWN will help agribusinesses to attract, develop and retain skilled workers. We are committed to driving employment in rural and regional Queensland. A healthy jobs market in the agricultural sector is essential for maintaining the vitality of the industry and local communities. Through programs such as the Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance and the Queensland Agriculture Workforce Network, we are ensuring employers have the best available information to help them attract and employ people with the right skills and experience for the task at hand.