




Speech By
Lachlan Millar

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

Record of Proceedings, 21 August 2019

ADJOURNMENT

Prickly Acacia

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (7.04 pm): The LNP is demanding that the Labor agriculture minister, Mark Furner, stump up and stop squirming and pay the \$5 million he promised to fight the spread of prickly acacia in flood affected North-West Queensland and Central Queensland. Mr Furner publicly promised the cash in a media statement he jointly issued with the then federal Minister for Agriculture, David Littleproud. Canberra's money is still on the table, despite the Queensland Labor government refusing to fund its agreed share. The minister made the promise to help farmers fight this damaging weed and he has blatantly broken his word. Rural Queenslanders cannot trust the word of the minister. This is another Labor kick for farmers who are really struggling.

The clock is ticking for the Labor Party to act before this weed spreads out of control into the prestigious Channel Country and Lake Eyre. Western Queensland is facing yet another environmental catastrophe unless action is taken now. The agriculture minister said there was 'some confusion' when he was quizzed about his commitment by our shadow minister for agriculture, the member for Gympie, during the agricultural estimates hearing, but he refused to say if the \$5 million would be paid. The only person who is confused about this is the Labor agriculture minister. His attempt to dispute his own words was confusing and pathetic.

I promise graziers that I will keep fighting, along with the member for Gympie and also the member for Condamine, who tabled documents in this parliament recently about the prickly acacia spreading between Winton and Julia Creek. I can assure them that I will fight to make sure we get this money on the table. This is the worst kind of political treachery. To promise something to those who need it and then weasel your way out of it is an absolute disgrace. The minister should know, being the agriculture minister, that when you make an agreement and say you are going to do something in Western Queensland or regional Queensland, they expect you to do it. They do not expect you to weasel your way out of it. They find you out. As Graham Richardson most famously said, 'The mob always works you out eventually,' and they are working out this minister very much in Western Queensland.

This is just another example of the Labor government failing to give Western Queensland its fair share. The Channel Country is one of the most prestigious and most iconic pieces of country in Queensland. It is sacred to us. It is sacred to every Queenslanders. Yes, we talk about the Great Barrier Reef, and it is sacred, but so is the Channel Country. If that prickly acacia spreads into the Channel Country it is going to be there forever, and it is going to rip apart a lot of ecologically and environmentally sensitive country that we need to keep. I call on the minister to pay the money. Do not squib us and make sure that \$5 million is on the table.