




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Weather Events, Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (10.02 am): The floods in North-West Queensland are having a devastating impact on livestock, farm infrastructure, primary producers and communities. On Sunday I visited Hughenden, Richmond, Julia Creek and Winton. Many families in these communities have endured years of drought and now have been inundated by record-breaking floods. Herds kept alive where there was a severe lack of rain have been decimated by floodwaters. I spoke to each of the mayors and toured some of the stations that had been impacted.

It is important for the House to be aware that these communities are still engaged in the response and it may take a while yet before final losses are known. I was deeply moved by what I saw. It is very confronting. I was moved also by the incredible efforts of many who have thrown themselves into the rescue and recovery effort. I pass on my appreciation to the mayors and councillors, as well as others on the ground, who have been active through the response. My department has been engaged with industry regarding the impacts on each of the sectors and to facilitate fodder requirements. Direct intelligence and advice from local government on the ground was that fodder was often not an immediate concern but aviation fuel was. Aviation fuel has made it to the communities where it is required, with assistance in particular from the Australian Defence Force.

I understand the frustration and the heartache of those who have lost as many as 80 per cent of their livestock. Under the joint Queensland and federal government Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, category B and C, assistance for primary producers is underway for Burdekin, Cloncurry, Douglas, Flinders, Hinchinbrook, McKinlay, Townsville City, Richmond and Winton councils. These include grants for primary producers up to \$75,000, concessional loans up to \$250,000 and working capital loans up to \$100,000, plus freight subsidies of \$5,000. With strong leadership from the Premier and the other agencies involved we will stand side by side with these communities and these producers and be right there with them as they go through a long and tough recovery exercise.