



Speech By  
**Hon. Mark Furner**


**MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE**

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Record of Proceedings, 26 February 2019

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Floods, Agricultural Industry**

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (10.08 am): It is positive to see that all sections of the community have come together to support those impacted by the North Queensland flooding. The devastation that has been seen across the north-west is exceptional and confronting. Over the last fortnight I have seen on several occasions the impacts on the ground in Hughenden, Richmond, Julia Creek—with the Premier—Cloncurry and Winton. The mayors, councils and producers are now turning to recovery and finances going forward. In the previous fortnight I have convened meetings with the senior and regional agri-bankers in Cloncurry as well as in Brisbane. I note that the major banks, as well as other financial lenders, have all publicly announced assistance for producers and this is welcomed.

The economic fundamentals of most producers in this sector in this region, as noted by the most recent QRIDA Rural Debt Survey, are sound and, notwithstanding this event, most producers are likely to be viable in the longer term. Sadly, this rainfall is the best some producers have had after years of drought—relief turned to despair. I heard from producers that when the rains started there was hope. After a few days it was clear that the rain has now brought devastation.

Community groups and individuals have also given their support to the region with both donated fodder and assistance with repairs to infrastructure. Due to the magnitude of the event, the Australian Defence Force, supported by the Palaszczuk government; industry groups such as AgForce; and local government have delivered large amounts of fodder to livestock across the most severely impacted region. The focus now is on livestock disposal and obtaining a more accurate assessment of damage—and this will take time. I commend the Department of Transport and Main Roads for their efforts in the recovery of livestock and the disposal process as well.

Flooding impacts in the gulf shires will be significant, with many producers losing significant numbers of livestock and farm infrastructure. All levels of government have promptly responded to support the region with the activation of assistance under the disaster recovery funding arrangements. For primary producers this includes concessional loans, freight subsidies and clean-up and recovery grants, which for this event are up to \$75,000. I can report that, as of yesterday, QRIDA approved a total of 36 recovery grant applications for almost \$2.2 million. Going forward, I encourage the community to keep up the support to our producers and, down the track, to visit these regions and to support the Queensland flood appeal.