




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Biosecurity

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (10.01 am): I am pleased to inform the House that the Queensland Palaszczuk government has committed a further \$12 million to control and contain Panama disease tropical race 4 in our banana production areas. This funding will support the development of a shared partnership agreement with the Australian Banana Growers' Council, the ABGC. We have contained the disease for just over four years now thanks to the collective action of Biosecurity Queensland, the ABGC, individual growers, research bodies and the wider community.

Right from the first detection in March of 2015 government and industry worked in partnership to ensure world's best practice in the management of TR4 to support our growers and protect the region's \$600 million industry. The August 2018 independent review of the TR4 response recommended that our efforts continue under a formal partnership with a jointly funded and delivered program between government and industry. Growers have also invested in on-farm biosecurity and their levies contribute to banana research and development. I would also like to acknowledge the industry purchased the first infested farm and the subsequent shutdown of all operations on that property has contributed to the containment of TR4.

The necessity of this coordinated approach highlights just how critical biosecurity is for the protection of our primary industries. That is why I really hope that the federal government does not drop the ball on this in tonight's federal budget. Already we have seen a 25 per cent cut in biosecurity staff by the federal government, which is a major threat when we consider the state's geographical position and climate put it on the front line of biosecurity threats to this country. The federal government likes to spruik that it is tough on border control, yet it makes a 25 per cent cut in the biosecurity staff that are supposed to be keeping our nation and its primary industries secure from these threats. Let's hope we will see these cuts rescinded and Queensland get its fair share in the federal budget tonight.