



Speech By  
**Hon. Mark Furner**


**MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE**

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Record of Proceedings, 1 May 2019

**MOTION**

**Labour Movement**

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (2.37 pm): It gives me great pleasure to speak to this motion moved by the Minister for Industrial Relations. As members would probably remember, before I entered the Senate I was a union official for three unions: the Transport Workers Union as an organiser, an industrial officer for the Queensland Police Union of Employees—a union that has not been mentioned today, but I am very proud that I spent a number of years supporting the men and women who protect our citizens on a daily basis—and as secretary of the National Union of Workers.

We must accept and support this motion, and I encourage those opposite also to do that. I see the member for Gregory having a giggle. No doubt, on many occasions he would drive past the Tree of Knowledge and recognise its importance and the solidarity of people who fought for better conditions in the wool industry. Shearers got together and organised themselves to fight for better conditions right across the west of Queensland as we are doing now. On a daily basis the Palaszczuk government is supporting those shearers and the sheep industry with cluster fencing. The opposition and the opposition leader condemned that cluster fencing and referred to it as 'shiny gates'. What a shame when the Labor government, as it has done traditionally since that time—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stevens): Order! There is far too much conversation between different members across the House. Please, if you want to put your hand up to speak, speak, but otherwise we will hear the member.

**Mr FURNER:** Once again, as a Labor government has always done, we have backed in the bush, we have supported farmers. Supporting the shearing industry is one example of what we proudly do as a Labor government.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr FURNER:** Once again I hear the cries and the adulation of those opposite supporting my comments in regard to this motion. Those opposite will have the opportunity to support the motion when it comes time to vote. I refer to workers compensation, one of the points on this motion in front of me. On many occasions when I was with the Police Union I represented men and women at a medical assessment tribunal, mostly in relation to stress cases. Over successive governments, workers compensation has been watered down. Those opposite watered down the common law capacity for workers to claim workers compensation in those cases where they were injured in their workplaces. Once again it demonstrates the reason why those opposite should be backing this motion here today.

The men and women of the Police Service who day in, day out represent citizens across all Queensland should be commended. Those opposite should be supporting those men and women of the Queensland Police Union on every occasion as opposed to coming in here and condemning them.

In relation to 10 days of paid domestic and family violence leave, what an honourable opportunity to have that as a provision put forward by the Palaszczuk Labor government. As a white ribbon ambassador I am always standing up for the cause to make sure we eliminate abuse and domestic violence in this state. The *Not now, not ever* recommendations have bipartisan support and both sides should support this motion on the very basis that we need to support women in cases of domestic violence.

In regard to providing real wage rises for our lowest paid and opposing cuts to penalty rates, I can recall an occasion in Hervey Bay, leading into the 2013 election, where we put up a street stall in front of a florist to campaign. We went in out of courtesy to speak to the florist and she indicated that her business was doing poorly. She indicated to me strongly that the reason why the business was doing poorly was as a result of the cuts the Newman government had brought in and the 14,000 workers it had dismissed. When workers' conditions and penalty rates are cut and 14,000 workers are sacked, it has a flow-on effect in the economy. We need to support fair wages, penalty rates and conditions for workers so the end result flows on into the economy. Those opposite would not understand that. They have no idea when it comes to the economy. Obviously they have no idea when it comes to unions and the importance of having them viable and playing a supportive role in the community to make sure workers are paid correctly so that they, in turn, can spend money into the economy.