



Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

**State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development
Committee, Report**

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (3.09 pm): Another estimates, another lost opportunity for those opposite. This was another failure for the LNP in terms of reading the SDS. I want to thank the chair and the committee for their interest in the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries SDS as well as the commitment that the Palaszczuk government has to this portfolio. This budget is a budget delivering for agriculture and fisheries in Queensland. It is a budget that stands in sharp contrast to the LNP's effort in agriculture. Those opposite like to trumpet their record in the portfolio, so let us compare and contrast. Labor's 2019-20 budget was \$525 million whereas the LNP's budget when it was last in power was \$408 million. Regional Queenslanders and industry remember what the LNP was like in government and Queenslanders never forget—600 Department of Agriculture and Fisheries staff sacked when those opposite were last in government.

I am proud of what my portfolio has delivered for agricultural businesses in this state through RED Grants. These Rural Economic Development Grants have seen some great businesses supported by the government. These businesses are across regional Queensland and this investment is assisting in employing extra people and making businesses more profitable, which is good for Queensland and great news for local towns. There will be 600 Queensland jobs as a result of the first tranche of the RED Grants.

One of the key commitments of this year's budget that was raised at the hearing in terms of the investments being made to the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy is this government's ongoing fisheries reform process. On the day of the hearing I had much pleasure welcoming new Boating and Fisheries Patrol officers. These new officers will be posted across Queensland to ensure that fisheries in Queensland are protected from black marketing and illegal fishing. Conversely, the LNP sought to water down new laws and let black marketers off the hook for five days. The LNP is soft on crime. There are also new Indigenous and multicultural liaison officers employed to ensure that our fisheries message is promoted across our diverse state.

It was interesting that the LNP did not have too many good questions on fisheries and my only thought was that it could be the fact that the LNP does not have a clue on where it stands on fisheries. The LNP does not know where it stands on the MRAG report and it does not know where it stands on

fisheries. All Queenslanders need to know is that when the LNP was in government it sacked 28 per cent of fisheries staff, and it is important to highlight a matter I spoke of during the estimates hearing when I said—

It is disappointing that the LNP has repeatedly reneged on their own election commitment to support the spirit of the MRAG reforms, many of which were articulated in the 2016 green paper on fisheries management. Our 10-year reform strategy is showing significant progress, and I am proud to be part of a government that is making a financial investment in our public service and our fisheries so that we can manage them effectively and sustainably into the future.

It is important that those opposite appreciate that we need to ensure that we have a sustainable fisheries in Queensland so that we do not end up like other states that have had to close fisheries because stock has become dangerously depleted through poor management practices, and I refer to the South Australian model as an example in that it is closing down snapper until 2023. I recommend that those opposite re-read MRAG, look at the sustainable fisheries reform and seek a briefing maybe from my department or my office to ensure that we keep this resource for their children and their grandchildren into the future.

Given recent media, it was a credit to the committee to raise the issue of fire ants and the ongoing eradication effort. This, like the LNP, is a pest that needs to be eradicated. It is disappointing when the opposition plays politics with biosecurity. It is even more disappointing when it plays politics without having the facts. This is a nationally oversighted program with expert advice from all over the world. Again I offer the opposition a briefing and I encourage those opposite to get the facts on this program and not listen to those few who try to talk the program down.

I want to highlight the ongoing work my department is doing with the strawberry industry as a case in hand. I want to thank the committee in allowing me the opportunity to promote the #eatqld campaign. It is a very simple campaign that even those opposite can follow—that is, when you are out having enjoyable Queensland food, take a photo of it and put it on social media under #eatqld. In conclusion, I thank the committee, the government, the opposition and crossbenchers for their engagement during the estimates process, the committee secretariat, Hansard and my department. Next year all I can hope for is that the LNP has an agriculture policy and a half decent budget reply speech that deals with agriculture.