




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

Record of Proceedings, 20 August 2019

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Protesters

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (9.54 am): The Palaszczuk government stands up for our primary producers. Protesters have the right to protest peacefully, but they do not have the right to disrupt our hardworking farmers. They have no right to trespass, lock themselves to machinery or cause biosecurity risks to our agricultural sector. As minister for agriculture I will always stand up for the rights of our primary producers to farm, produce quality Queensland food and go through their day without being disrupted by noisy activists. That is why as a government we acted. Earlier this year, when there were incursions onto farmland and feedlots, we acted. As a government we introduced new regulations to ensure our on-farm biosecurity was protected. These on-the-spot fines can be issued to any protester who goes onto land and causes a potential biosecurity risk to farms.

Queenslanders are fed up with these protesters and community support is not on their side. That is why this week I will introduce a bill to impose tougher penalties on any protester who causes a biosecurity risk. Those found guilty of trespassing on farmland will face a maximum penalty of up to one year's imprisonment. That is the same penalty for unlawful entry to a dwelling. This will make a real difference and ensure that our farmers, abattoirs and food manufacturers are not disrupted, causing work delays and possibly putting protesters themselves at risk. What some of these protesters forget is that by their very actions they can cause unnecessary angst to animals and potentially risk ongoing biosecurity concerns at these locations.

Agriculture is important to Queensland. The livelihoods of our producers is paramount, and the stress that has been placed on our agricultural sector is just not on. We have acted. We will continue to act. We will not allow protesters to try to dictate agricultural policy in this state. Our farmers know that they have community support and they have the support of the Palaszczuk government.