




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

Record of Proceedings, 16 October 2019

MOTION

Paradise Dam, Parliamentary Inquiry

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (5.46 pm): I rise to oppose the motion moved by the member for Nanango. It is clear that those opposite have no clue what this motion is really about and what it is trying to accomplish. If they are after a review, they should realise that a review is already underway. That was announced last month. I know that news can be slow to reach the opposition—

Mr Batt interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Bundaberg!

Mr FURNER:—but surely they are not so slow that they do not know that a media release went out last month? We should await the outcome of that review. To be moving for competing reviews shows that those opposite do not want to listen to expert advice, but want to create community ripples. We should listen to the experts and see what the advice is.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Bundaberg, you are warned under the standing orders. Member for Burnett, you have just given a contribution. Member for Nanango, you have had your opportunity as well. I ask that we hear the member for Ferry Grove.

Mr FURNER: Thank you for your protection, Mr Speaker. Those opposite may also forget that Queensland can be impacted by significant wet seasons. Earlier this year the member for Gympie and I travelled to see the effects of the monsoonal event. They may also be forgetting—and I acknowledge that the member for Bundaberg raised it in his contribution—that in 2013 a cyclone and large-scale flooding devastated Bundaberg and caused significant damage in the dam's vicinity. Those opposite should recall that the then LNP minister, Mark McArdle, commissioned a review of the dam to assess the damage, SunWater's response to the flood event, remedial works and updates to the emergency action plan. Therefore, reviews announced by their side when in government should be of no surprise.

How many reviews does the LNP really want on this matter? Like many things those opposite say about dams, it is all talk and no action. Every time those opposite talk about dams, it is an election pitch. It is all bubble and froth, with no water underneath. The Leader of the Opposition, like many LNP leaders before her, only goes through the motions. The party she leads is unfit to govern, unfit to lecture and unable to accept the facts.

Talking about facts, let me reflect on what was said today. Earlier today members opposite misled the House saying the Palaszczuk government was cutting support to drought-impacted farmers. I say again that those opposite should try to comprehend the facts sometimes. Producers who are currently drought declared will continue to receive assistance as long as they are drought declared. The only cuts come from those opposite.

In terms of agricultural productivity, the member for Gympie acknowledged that he has applied for individually droughted property status. If the member for Gympie can do it, anyone can do it. I encourage those opposite to make sure they call 132523 to find out how.

Mr Perrett interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Gympie will cease his interjections.

Mr FURNER: In terms of water security, what makes a real difference for producers is the On-farm Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate scheme. In 2015 the Commonwealth cut its top-up of this rebate. They ignored the repeated requests of not only me but previous agriculture ministers to reinstate that funding that makes a real difference to producers in the midst of drought. It was not until 2018 that it was reinstated by the Commonwealth after copious calls by the Palaszczuk Labor government. I remind those opposite that EWIR remains part of this government's response to drought assistance for those producers requiring emergency water infrastructure.

Those opposite have no understanding that responses to drought need to be diverse and sustainable. We will work with industry as we always do on this side of the House. We work with experts. We work with the community. This motion moved by the LNP should not be supported. Those opposite should be ashamed of themselves for putting forward this motion and politicising the issues at a time when farmers are in drought. When farmers need assistance where do they turn? Do they pick up the phone and ring their counterparts in Canberra and ask them to put the 200 farmers who were pulled off the Farm Household Allowance back onto the allowance so that they can get assistance in their time of need? Who would farmers want on their side? They want the Palaszczuk government. We have farmers' backs and we always will.