



Speech By  
**Hon. Mark Furner**


**MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 October 2019

**MOTION**

**Future Drought Fund**

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (11.27 am): What a load of hogwash. What we have heard about drought from those opposite today is absolute nonsense. The Leader of the Opposition could not even mutter the word drought in her budget reply speech. This shows how incompetent and out of touch this leader, who purports to represent primary producers, is.

If anyone in this House needs any reminding how distant the federal coalition is from the impacts of drought in Queensland, the Prime Minister's contribution in parliament this week highlights that. The Prime Minister remarked—

We learnt in Queensland today, in the minister for drought's electorate, that it's been going for eight years.

He continued—

... the Future Drought Fund is not to provide direct financial assistance payments to farmers.

This is the position that this federal government takes when it comes to drought.

I do not need to travel to Sydney, I do not need to travel to Margaret River, like the member for Gympie does, to learn about drought. I get around the regions and talk to farmers. I talk to them on a weekly basis and get an understanding and appreciation of what they are feeling when it comes to the drought. That is why in this year's budget the government committed over \$74 million over four years for drought. That is why this government commissioned an independent drought review by a representative of QFF and AgForce. They handed down their report and we provided our response, and we will continue to support farmers until this drought is over.

Let us have a look at the comments from the drought envoy. He is on the record in newspapers saying recently, 'Get a job.' He is saying that to our primary producers, to our farmers who are doing it tough. 'Get a job,' he tells struggling farmers. He goes on to comment, 'What are you doing with your life? What are you doing on the land?' This is the drought envoy who purports to represent primary producers right across this nation.

This mob opposite should be ashamed of themselves when it comes to drought. They should be ashamed of themselves when it comes to supporting primary producers and the people who are struggling on our land and who are doing it tough. We know for a fact that the government has cut more than 200 farmers from the farm household allowance in the middle of the drought. We are committed to our drought funding right through until this drought is over. That is the commitment from the Palaszczuk Labor government who knows where support for farmers is required and who knows what farmers need through the copious trips not only taken by me as minister for agriculture but taken by every other minister, including the Premier, in our travels right across the regions. We have an understanding of what our farmers need. We know what they need. That is why we are supporting them through and through.