




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

Record of Proceedings, 24 October 2019

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

QRIDA, 25th Anniversary

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (10.01 am): This month marks a quarter of a century since the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority was established to assist Queensland's primary producers establish and expand their businesses and recover from natural disasters. Over the past 25 years, close to \$4 billion has been invested and almost 93,000 primary producers, small businesses and others across regional Queensland have been assisted through a range of government financial assistance programs administered by QRIDA on behalf successive Queensland and Australian governments.

Already, more than \$1 billion in low-interest loans for Queensland farmers has been approved through the Queensland government's flagship Primary Industry Productivity Enhancement Scheme to assist new entrants into agriculture and build long-term productivity and sustainability. On a recent trip out to Thargomindah in Western Queensland, Anthony proudly showed me around his sheep property. He has erected 102 kilometres of wild dog fencing, an initiative of the Palaszczuk government. Another \$865 million has been delivered in disaster recovery grants and loans to help primary producers, small businesses and non-profit organisations get back on their feet after cyclones, floods, fires and other natural disasters.

On 1 October 1994, the Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority was established under the Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994. Previously the Government Schemes Division within the Queensland Industry Development Corporation, QRAA became an independent statutory authority. QRAA became the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority on 1 July 2017 as a result of the Farm Business Debt Mediation Act 2017 and is now responsible for administering an even broader range of programs and services, including the now mandatory Farm Business Debt Mediation program, Farm Debt Restructure Office and the biennial Queensland Rural Debt Survey.

In total, QRIDA has administered more than 90 different loan, grant and rebate assistance programs, from solar and storage loans and grants for households, rebates on energy-saving investments for farmers and large firms, to equipment and professional advice rebates for farmers, fishers and bus operators. More recently, I am especially proud of the \$10 million Rural Economic Development Grant Scheme, which is administered by QRIDA. Under the first round of funding for this Palaszczuk government initiative we have supported 15 regional businesses to create some 600 regional jobs.

I would like to acknowledge the work of QRIDA, its board, management and staff on its commitment to rural and regional Queenslanders over the past 25 years. I remain excited about its future as an outstanding government financial assistance delivery agency.