




Speech By
Brittany Lauga

MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

Record of Proceedings, 2 December 2020

MOTION

Agriculture Industry

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (5.14 pm): I rise to speak against the private member's motion moved by the member for Gympie and in support of the amendment moved by the minister. Following on from the member for Condamine, I suggest that if he really cared about agriculture, if he really cared about farmers and graziers in Queensland, he would pick up the phone to his federal LNP counterparts and demand that they sort out this trade war with China which is hurting Queensland's farmers.

This motion moved by the LNP shows that they have not learnt anything during their time in opposition. They still cannot read the budget papers and they still cannot admit that when they were in government they sacked 600 DAF staff. The Palaszczuk government has always been a strong supporter of Queensland's agricultural sector. As everyone in this House knows, there is no better friend of farmers than this government.

The LNP have never been a friend to our farmers—sacking DAF staff, opposing action on climate change, supporting failures in trade relationships and opposing good policy. I will remind those opposite that we have continued to stand shoulder to shoulder with our farmers throughout this challenging year. Not only have Queensland farmers endured years of the worst drought in living memory, not only have farmers experienced relentless and devastating natural disasters—bushfires, cyclones, floods—over the years—

Mr Watts interjected.

Mr Saunders interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): The members for Maryborough and Toowoomba North will cease their conversation across the chamber.

Ms LAUGA:—but now, in 2020, Queensland farmers are navigating a global pandemic. We were the first jurisdiction in the country to declare agriculture as an essential service so that the movement of agricultural goods could continue. During the difficult months of lockdown, we secured our food supply, meaning that not only could produce come into our state but also Queensland meat, fruit, veggies and other produce continued to feed the nation.

Mr Lister: On paper. You stuffed it up in process. I know. I have 450 kilometres of border country.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Southern Downs, that language is getting very close to being unparliamentary. I ask that you withdraw.

Mr LISTER: I withdraw.

Ms LAUGA: Groups like Growcom described the Palaszczuk government's support of the state's farmers during the pandemic as the best in the nation. The food, the fibre, the jobs, the stories and the lifelong relationships the industry fosters remain the backbone of rural communities and this state's economy. This government works closely with industry, rural communities and the people who represent those in the bush.

On top of all of the natural disasters, the global pandemic and the drought, farmers also now have to face a trade war with China—a fight that they do not need or want to be caught up in, especially not now. The Prime Minister has overseen a complete breakdown of the relationship with China which is now threatening farmers' livelihoods in Queensland and right across the country.

Like many, my heart broke at the thought of those beautiful blue and orange live Australian rock lobsters dying and spoiling on the tarmac in China as a result of the Chinese-Australian trade tensions. Tonnes of live rock lobsters, which take years to grow to size and are one of Australia's most highly prized seafood delicacies, spoiled and wasted on the tarmac because of the federal government's inability to negotiate and manage a relationship with Queensland's largest trading partner. It is an absolute mess. We know that other exports including beef, cotton and barley have been affected by Chinese-Australian tensions which are hurting Queensland farmers.

Mr Lister interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Southern Downs, you are warned.

Ms LAUGA: If Queensland agricultural exports continue to be affect, there is no doubt that Queensland jobs and businesses will be deeply impacted. Farmers will suffer. Why don't those opposite care about that? What are those opposite doing about the impact on Queensland farmers? Primary industries are worth more than \$13 billion to Queensland annually in gross value of production. Farmers have certainly helped buoy our economy through this global pandemic.

The member for Gympie and all of those members opposite need to pick up the phone to their federal LNP counterparts, to Minister Littleproud and to the Prime Minister, and demand that this is sorted out. Sort it out because it is hurting Queensland farmers and our Queensland economy—and it is only going to get worse. Our farmers need our support, and the Palaszczuk government is honouring its commitments by delivering price relief for critical input costs, funding for resilience and risk reduction, dam safety improvement projects and biosecurity.

Deep down inside the member for Gympie knows that the Palaszczuk government is doing the right thing by our hardworking Queensland farmers. The member for Gympie's title of shadow minister for agriculture, fisheries and forestry remains the ghost of the Newman LNP government past—those three turbulent years in our state's recent past that Queenslanders clearly have neither forgotten nor forgiven. I do not support the motion.

(Time expired)