



Speech By  
**Jessica Pugh**


**MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY**

---

Record of Proceedings, 2 December 2020

**MOTION**

**Agriculture Industry**

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (5.34 pm): I rise to address the private member's motion as amended and to debunk the myth once and for all that the LNP is the natural party of the Queensland farmer. Those on this side of the House—although I am now sitting on the other side of the House—have not forgotten that the Labor Party's great Australian story started among the striking shearers in Barcardine. Our literal party roots are in the farming sector, and we have not forgotten that. In fact we are very proud of it. Those opposite would be hard-pressed to say the same, given their highly selective memory of what Campbell Newman's government did to the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries just seven years ago. They only need to look at our support for Queensland farmers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

What did we see from the Palaszczuk Labor government? Agriculture and food production was declared an essential industry in the very earliest days of the pandemic before any other Australian state had thought to do the same. An agricultural coordination group inclusive of more than 70 key stakeholder industry groups and businesses was there to make sure that the industry could continue to feed Queensland, other states and indeed markets around the world. As the proud daughter of a restaurateur, I know just how important that is.

The Palaszczuk government worked side by side with industry to ensure that our freight routes were protected and sustainable and that the agricultural businesses were able to cross borders in a COVID-safe way that meant businesses could continue and that Queensland communities were also kept safe from this dangerous and contagious illness. We knew the importance of ensuring that agricultural freight could cross while also making sure that our communities were kept safe, and we make no apologies for doing so.

We provided the market diversification and resilience grants to help affected agribusinesses to adapt to meet new markets as access to some markets disappeared or was suspended because of COVID-19. We adapted a new round of these grants for the fisheries industry to make sure that export businesses, especially live export businesses in this sector, did not miss out. We provided \$1 billion in COVID jobs support loans. In the agricultural sector alone, these loans pumped \$16.8 million into the Queensland economy, directly supporting more than 1,300 jobs across 129 agriculture related businesses. That is real support. That is tangible support directly for the agriculture industry that saved hundreds and hundreds of jobs right across rural and regional Queensland.

I will just give a picture of why this support was so important and how it meant that the industry was able to get back on its feet. The convention centre here in Brisbane and the convention centres up and down the coastline of Queensland were the only ones that were essentially able to stay somewhat functional during the COVID crisis. They were actually able to stay open and trade in some way, shape or form. The Brisbane convention centre put out over a million plates of food a year and they source that food from Queensland farmers first and foremost. They are proud Queensland provedores. It was

really fantastic that they were able to continue sourcing this food and continue putting the food on the plates for people visiting the Brisbane convention centre. Thanks to the strong actions of the Palaszczuk government, our convention centres here in Queensland were the only—

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Ms PUGH:** I am sorry but my father is the executive chef there, member for Nanango, so I think I would know. I take your interjection.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order! Member for Mount Ommaney, you will put your comments through the chair.

**Ms PUGH:** My apologies and thank you for your counsel, Mr Deputy Speaker. As I was saying, these providers were able to continue supplying food. They were also providing food out the door to services like Meals on Wheels and other providers like that. The wonderful thing is that they are now up and running and they are essentially leaps and bounds ahead of other convention centres in other states because of the strong measures we took. The food that they are serving and the food that is walking out the door is good Queensland produce. I am incredibly proud of the Palaszczuk government's record on this. I think it speaks volumes. I will certainly be supporting the amendments, but I will not be supporting the original motion.