



Speech By  
**Hon. Mark Furner**


**MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE**

---

Record of Proceedings, 3 December 2020

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Primary Industry Productivity Enhancement Scheme**

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (10.01 am): The Palaszczuk government has always backed our farmers and assisted in the expansion of their businesses. One measure of support has been the Primary Industry Productivity Enhancement Scheme administered through QRIDA. The aim of PIPES is twofold. First, it is to grant loans to provide concessional finance of up to \$2 million to help people in the initial years of establishing agribusinesses. Secondly, for established farmers there are low-rate loans of up to \$1.3 million to help improve the sustainability of their business. That could cover anything from installing new irrigation systems to improve water efficiencies through to developing systems that help adapt to climate variabilities.

The PIPES program has been extremely popular. In August this year in Ayr I was fortunate to meet the Slater family who are the recipients of a First Start loan. They have used that loan to buy their own 44-hectare cane farm, where they are using their background in agronomy and agricultural engineering to introduce new farming systems. Both Heath and Fiona come from a background in cane and they believe in the industry. It is great to see that that confidence in the Queensland sugar industry is being backed by a First Start loan through the Primary Industry Productivity Enhancement Scheme.

When we came to government, PIPES was capped at \$60 million. The Palaszczuk government understood the importance of the scheme and increased the annual amount to \$100 million. I am happy to inform the House today that in the 2021-22 financial year the Palaszczuk government will back our farmers again by raising that cap to \$120 million. That is up from the \$100 million limit set for this year. It fulfils the election commitment we made to the farmers of this state.

I encourage anyone thinking about getting into farming or establishing producers needing help to improve the sustainability of their business to give QRIDA a call. When we back our farmers to grow and expand, it gives them the confidence to get on with doing what they do best: producing the clean green food and fibre that the rest of the world is searching and will pay top dollar for. Backing our farmers gives them the confidence to create more jobs. More jobs in regional Queensland is what this government is all about.