




Speech By
Patrick Weir

MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE

Record of Proceedings, 5 February 2020

MOTION

Maleny Dairies

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (5.42 pm): I rise to support the private member's motion introduced into this House by the shadow minister for state development, manufacturing infrastructure and planning and member for Glass House, Andrew Powell. The Palaszczuk government is constantly telling us to support local business with their Buy Queensland policy splashed across our television screens. At the campaign launch the Minister for Public Works actively sought out Maleny Dairies for photo opportunities. The Premier and minister followed this up at the Ekka, promoting their new policy alongside Maleny Dairies and advocating what a wonderful supplier of milk they were for Queenslanders, a locally owned and family operated dairy—which is all true. However, in its wisdom the government has now decided that Maleny Dairies is not up to the job of supplying milk to the metro north hospitals of Queensland. In its place French owned Lactalis, which has the majority of the contract, and Chinese owned Lion Dairy & Drinks, which will supply a niche market for special patient diets, won the tender to supply the Metro North Hospital and Health Service for the next two years.

This was an absolute slap in the face for Maleny Dairies, a proud Queensland owned and operated company. This government has implied that Maleny Dairies could not have fulfilled the tender, a claim which has been rigorously denied by the manager, Peter Falcongren, and owner, Ross Hopper. Over recent years Maleny Dairies has invested over \$9 million in factory improvements, including the installation of two robots on the production line to increase efficiencies and processing capacity. The supply of milk to metro north hospitals would have been safe, reliable and in capable hands. The contract to supply milk to all metro north hospitals would have meant that Maleny Dairies could have secured another Queensland owned dairy farming family to assist with the supply of milk required for the contract, thereby creating jobs for that farm and ensuring a secure future for the Queensland dairy industry as a whole.

Premier, what has happened to the multibillion dollar Buy Queensland strategy? What has happened to the pledges made by this government? There were promises made to support local businesses and jobs. A major shift was mooted in the way government bought or hired supplies and services. 'Supporting regional Queensland' is stated on the government website advertising this policy. It would appear the Premier has conveniently forgotten this pledge to Queenslanders. This strategy was welcomed by industry and owners of business as a way of safeguarding their future production and ensuring economic security. It was a strategy supported by all Queenslanders to get behind our local business owners and buy locally. I do not know about you, but that makes me feel as if this government is not exactly embracing family owned and operated businesses here in Queensland.

They are selling off contracts to companies outside of Australia, forgetting the importance of supporting local businesses and local jobs in Queensland. Clearly, Premier, your government needs to rethink the Buy Queensland policy; it is just not working. Local companies are tendering and failing to

be awarded contracts when companies that are obviously not local are. Maleny Dairies is truly local and they use local suppliers. They are locally owned, the milk is produced locally and they support the local community. How much more local can you get?

This was all before the news today that now Lactalis is going to close their Rockhampton facility at the cost of 47 jobs in the Rockhampton district. I wonder if the Premier and minister would have been so keen to award the contract to Lactalis if this had happened before the awarding of those contracts. We have heard the support for Lactalis by the Premier. If you go online and have a look at the *Courier-Mail* website, the lead story is the Premier's appeal to Lactalis to rescind its decision about laying off jobs and closing the Rockhampton facility. This government talks out of different sides of its mouth when it suits them. It is time this government truly backed our local businesses and renewed this contract. Maleny Dairies is a good Queensland owned business and deserves a fair go.