



Speech By  
**Hon. Glenn Butcher**


**MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE**

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Record of Proceedings, 13 May 2021

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Water Prices**

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (9.51 am): The Palaszczuk government knows that Queensland's agriculture industry is critical to delivering Queensland's plan for economic recovery from the global COVID-19 pandemic. We know access to cheaper water is key to growing this critical industry in Queensland. Reduced irrigation costs mean more crops, more jobs and more value. That is why we are delivering on our election commitment to Queensland irrigators to reduce their costs, helping them to grow their business and create jobs.

From 1 July, all irrigators in schemes where the Queensland government sets prices will have their 15 per cent discount automatically applied to their bills. That is all there is to it—15 per cent straight off their bills. The irrigation prices in the Queensland sugarcane regions report commissioned by the Australian Sugar Milling Council shows just how significant the discount could be. The report suggests earnings for canefarmers across the six water supply schemes could boost production by 782,390 tonnes, lifting earnings by 2.25 per cent per annum for the three years of the discount.

I have also written to Minister Furner to seek the appointment of the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority, or QRIDA as most people know it, to manage the balance of the 50 per cent discount for horticultural growers. The extra discount—an additional 35 per cent of water costs on top of the 15 per cent for all irrigators—will take the form of a rebate to growers of fruit, vegetables, nuts and turf.

Our objective by using QRIDA is to ensure that it is simple and straightforward for horticultural growers to claim their discount. I can also assure horticulture growers that QRIDA's program will be delivered without needing additional measurement equipment to be installed. As I have said before, this extra discount for horticulture growers is in recognition of the high value of their industry and the jobs it creates for Queenslanders. This is just one more example of how the government is delivering for irrigators and helping them, and the rest of the Queensland economy, contribute to the state's economic recovery.