



Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

Record of Proceedings, 23 February 2021


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (2020-2021) BILL

APPROPRIATION (2020-2021) BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation (2020-2021) Bill

State Development and Regional Industries Committee, Report

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (12.53 pm): The committee report makes clear that the Palaszczuk government is one of commitment to our regions, commitment to our farmers and commitment to the people of Queensland. In the face of the most significant pandemic to face the planet in more than 100 years, the Palaszczuk government has stood firmly behind our farmers. Supporting our primary producers is not a gimmick of the Labor Party. It is not an afterthought like it is for some parties; it is part of our DNA. In the face of the pandemic, this has been a year of—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Order, members! I remind members who are under a warning that no interjections will be made.

Mr FURNER: Thank you for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker. Agriculture is an essential industry and we were the first state in the nation to have it declared essential so that vital transport, logistics and supply chain operations could continue. We partnered with industry in an unprecedented way to make sure that its important voice was heard and important actions were taken. The Agriculture Coordination Group continues. In the midst of the pandemic we have maintained a strong position, defending Queensland from the highest level of invasive pest threats faced by any state. Because we moved swiftly and we partnered with industry, we are ready for the threat of African swine fever.

Mr Millar interjected.

Mr FURNER: The ongoing response to Panama TR4 sees our expertise making a difference in other continents as well. Importantly, the Palaszczuk government budget is a budget that delivers on the promises we made to Queenslanders and to industry. We are continuing to invest in our biosecurity and will continue to support the industry that is such a vital part of Queensland's plan for economic recovery. That is what the Palaszczuk government does. It supports existing industries and it supports new ones as well.

Mr Millar interjected.

Mr FURNER: The pandemic and its impacts on our export fisheries—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Gregory, you are already under a warning. You will leave the chamber for an hour.

Whereupon the honourable member for Gregory withdrew from the chamber at 12.55 pm.

Mr FURNER: The pandemic and its impacts on our export fisheries was a serious challenge for our fishing industry. It was one of the first affected, with the pandemic almost immediately affecting orders from China, and it was appropriate that it was the first to receive assistance as well. We moved quickly to ensure assistance in the early stages of the pandemic. Throughout all of this, we remained steadfast to ensure that our fishing industry could be sustainable in the future—not just for one season. We owe it to our children and our grandchildren to not let the resource this industry relies on be depleted beyond repair. We want an industry where there are commercial fishing jobs and a future where we have a thriving and popular recreational fishing industry which in turn supports tourism in many wonderful parts of our state.

We know that estimates is a trying time for all members. I want to acknowledge the effort and the commitment of committee members—all committee members—and in particular the chair, the member for Bancroft, for his excellent chairing during the December proceedings. I want to put on record my appreciation of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries throughout the year as well as during estimates and also to Dr Beth Woods, my retiring director-general, with last year's estimates her last. Her retirement is an end to an era for agriculture. I also want to thank the member for Noosa, who was unable to attend but did submit a number of questions via letter.

With regard to the dissenting report of the committee, it must be terribly disheartening for the opposition to aim so low and still find a way to disappoint. It is clear that the LNP cannot read and understand an SDS still. There are more staff in the department now than when the LNP was in government and yet it makes a valiant attempt to portray this as a cut to staff numbers. In terms of fisheries, Queensland needs to meet Commonwealth environmental commitments. These reforms to fisheries ensure our long-term vision for the sector. The LNP did not table its own reports. Until the LNP learns to read an SDS, the agriculture and fisheries sector can expect nothing more from an ill-informed, whingeing LNP.