




Speech By
Lachlan Millar

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

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ADJOURNMENT

Edmonds, Ms M; Gregory Electorate, Drought

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (6.12 pm): Madam Deputy Speaker Bush, first of all with your indulgence, I want to give a shout-out to Margaret, who leaves us tomorrow. She has been an absolutely wonderful woman and an absolutely wonderful presence around this House and made our jobs a little bit easier as our second home here in Parliament House. I wish her all of the very best. I wish she was not going.

Today is the first day of summer—even though you would not believe it if you went outside as it is like Melbourne in winter at the moment—but for my constituents in Gregory we may finally see the end of the epic drought. I am encouraged that the Blackall-Tambo shire is now officially drought free. However, drought declarations still remain in place for every other Gregory shire. This includes Boulia, Diamantina, Winton, Longreach, Barcoo, Barcaldine, Central Highlands and the Woorabinda shires which are still fully drought-declared. With continued rains, hopefully this will change over the summer. I want to remind property owners in my electorate that if they feel their property is still drought-affected but their shire is declared drought-free they can still apply for an individual drought property status. Property owners should also be aware that when the drought declaration is lifted in their area there are transport subsidies available to assist with the costs of bringing stock home from agistment and the costs of restocking. This has been an epic drought. It has lasted over 10 years in Western Queensland. We were ground zero. It began in Western Queensland and it will not be truly over until we can officially claim drought-free status.

People are more hopeful than they have been in the past, so just around the corner in 2023 will see us rebuilding. I want to take the opportunity to say how proud I am of the people of Gregory for the stoic way they have endured and are determined in the way that they look at rebuilding now. We are determined to ensure that we rebuild in a way that makes our agricultural businesses, our towns and our communities more drought resilient when we face the next drought. Agriculture, as members know, is the foundational pillar of our local economies in Gregory. Drought does not just affect livestock producers; it affects the work of businesses and the agricultural supply chain. I also want to take this opportunity to give a shout-out to the Western Queensland Drought Appeal. It has been fantastic. When I was elected in 2015 we were looking to find some way to get money to people who were struggling in the drought. I thank the Westpac bank and everybody involved. With a little bit of bias here, my EO Nicki Heslin in the Longreach office has been an absolute guiding light in making sure that this works. Nicki, thank you so much. We have been able to distribute millions of dollars to 17 western shires. I wish everybody a merry Christmas.