



Speech By  
**Hon. Mark Furner**


**MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE**

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Record of Proceedings, 26 May 2022

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT**

**Bees**

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (2.41 pm): This year we celebrated 200 years of beekeeping in Australia and last Friday we celebrated World Bee Day. If ever there was an animal that deserved the enormous honour of having a day dedicated to it for its importance to our lives, it is the little bee.

Bees are essential to our existence. Every time you put a piece of fruit in your lunchbox, have vegetables or salad on your plate, have toast and honey for breakfast or put flowers in a vase, bees can be thanked for their contribution. More than one-third of food crop production relies on the humble bee. They therefore play a critical role in Queensland's agriculture industry. Thankfully we have a thriving bee industry in Queensland to help feed us and fill our shelves. That industry is served well by the Queensland Beekeepers' Association, which I was pleased to host at parliament earlier this week. I pay tribute to secretary Jo Martin and the new president, Jacob Stevens.

Honey and honey products are certainly a sweetener to Queensland's economy with a value of over \$64 million. The Premier knows how sweet her electorate is, thanks to Capilano honey. If you have not tried Queensland's very own macadamia nut honey, you have not lived. I can highly recommend it in a cup of Queensland green tea.

Our bees produce incredible honey. They also help farmers across our state and interstate to pollinate crops and trees. Queensland Beekeepers' Association estimates Queensland pollination services provide over \$2 billion of economic value to Queensland. Crops dependent on pollination by our bees include mangoes, blueberries, almonds, macadamias and pumpkin, just to name a few.

While it seems like it is all honey and roses, Biosecurity Queensland and the industry need to beware of the diseases that threaten our bees and our industries. Varroa mite poses one of the biggest biosecurity threats to bees. It has devastated beehives and industries across the world. Thanks to scientists at Biosecurity Queensland and the bee industry, we have managed to eradicate it. We still need to be vigilant against disease. My department continues to work with industry to ensure the safety of our bees.

I would like to acknowledge all of the beekeepers in Queensland for their work in highlighting the importance of the bee. I have been encouraged by the president to come out to Warwick towards the end of budget week to be involved in the ironman bee exercise in that endeavour. Without bees, all of human existence is threatened; we cannot survive without them.