




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

Record of Proceedings, 1 September 2022

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

BaconFest

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (2.09 pm): The Palaszczuk government is a big supporter of all Queensland livestock industries. The pig industry today is worth \$370 million to our economy and employs thousands of Queenslanders in good jobs right across the state. Earlier this month I travelled to the South Burnett to celebrate all things pork at BaconFest in Kingaroy. I could not think of a better place to celebrate Queensland's pork industry than the South Burnett. After all, the state's biggest processor, Swickers, is based there, employing close to 1,000 workers. It was the Palaszczuk government that worked with Swickers to help them rebuild and expand after that devastating fire in 2016.

The first BaconFest back in 2018 attracted some 8,000 people—this is the third since that date—but I can guarantee that number was easily surpassed at this year's event. They certainly brought home the bacon! People from all over the state packed into the main streets of Kingaroy to celebrate the pig, not only pork but also all the South Burnett has to offer, including the local peanut and wine industries. I want to give a massive shout-out to 'Chief Baconeer' Kristy Board and her nearly 200 volunteers for putting on such a crackling weekend. I was privileged to speak at both openings on Friday night and Saturday morning.

The Queensland pork industry has had some challenging times. Years of drought and COVID have disrupted the operations of many producers. The ongoing biosecurity threats of African swine fever, lumpy skin disease—obviously that does not affect pigs—and Japanese encephalitis have also proven a challenge, but the Palaszczuk government has been with our producers every step of the way. Biosecurity Queensland has been working with the industry on these threats right from the start.

I would like to thank the Premier for her strong support of agriculture with her announcement at the Ekka of an additional \$22 million to boost Queensland's biosecurity capacity, including up to 15 new staff, more support to industry to ensure producers have their own biosecurity preparedness strategies, and boosting Queensland's coordinated feral pig control capacity. That is what the Palaszczuk Government does best—providing better services to our farmers and continuing to support the more than 365,000 people in secure, good jobs in the agriculture industry.

While I was out there I went to Plenty Foods and assisted them with an overview of a Rural Economic Development Grant, that is up to \$200,000 towards the advancement of that particular business, creating more good jobs in the Nanango electorate. After leaving the BaconFest on Saturday, I bought some beautiful bacon and kabana from Piggy in the Middle, a well-established business in Kilkivan in the member for Gympie's electorate. It was some of the best kabana and bacon I have ever tasted!

(Time expired)