




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Agriculture Industry, Cost of Living

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (10.00 am): When it comes to helping Queenslanders with cost-of-living pressures, our primary producers know they have no better friend than the Palaszczuk Labor government. Our primary producers benefit from having a Labor government that knows the impacts that droughts and natural disasters have on agriculture and the government can and does lend a helping hand. In this year's budget alone we have an estimated \$25.3 million in concessions.

Although the recent rains make it seem that the drought has passed, conversely 44.9 per cent of Queensland is still drought declared. Some shires have been drought declared since 2013. My department assists our primary producers with drought support through recent reforms, assisting more producers going forward. For new primary producers, QRIDA has First Start Loans to assist new entrants to agriculture and is helping existing producers with PIPES loans. Of course, we have doubled the PIPES loans to \$120 million each year.

After natural disasters, which Queensland faces all too often, the government is there to help support our producers. As AgForce says, every farmer needs a friend and every farmer knows that there is a government here that is delivering day in, day out to ensure that they remain productive and processing. We know that climate impacts have a flow-on effect on food and groceries and that is why in our government, with industry, we act.

Just last week we were in the Lockyer Valley, on the Sunshine Coast with the member for Nicklin and at Burpengary with the member for Kurwongbah to announce the provision of our RED Grants, creating good jobs in regional Queensland and making a difference to Queensland businesses, to Queensland workers and to Queensland consumers. RED Grants were developed by Labor, delivered by Labor and supported by good Labor members right across this state.

Only Labor will continue to support our farmers through ongoing concessions, future RED Grants and action on climate change to support farmers during droughts and other disasters. By helping our farmers we help Queenslanders with cost-of-living pressures. It is only this side of the House that has realistic policies when it comes to agriculture and action on climate change.