




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Biosecurity, Disaster Preparedness

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (10.12 am): We do not agree on everything in this House, but the one thing we do agree on is that all of us—no matter where we were born, where we grew up or where we work—feel the heartbreak when disaster occurs. No-one, including every person in this House—whether we are from Townsville, Toowoomba, Tanbar or Tully—is immune from the reach of disaster. In Queensland, and as we have seen recently in New South Wales and Victoria, disasters come in the form of floods and fires. The aftermath is devastating but the key to ensuring losses are minimised is preparedness. We can often see them coming. We prepare for the worst and hope for the best. The thing about fires and floods is usually we get some kind of warning. We know when the rains come that rivers rise, and when fires start the smell of smoke alerts us.

However, with biosecurity disasters, we often do not see them coming and we need to be prepared for a biosecurity disaster. You are probably thinking that we can see FMD and LSD coming, but long before it got this close Biosecurity Queensland, our state and national partners and industry were preparing for the worst to ensure the best possible outcome. Biosecurity threats such as pests, animal diseases and invasive plants do not necessarily give us warning signs. They are not like fires or floods, but they have the potential to be just as devastating to our agricultural families and industries and our economy.

I am pleased to advise the House that the \$22 million of funding announced in August by the Premier this year at the Ekka is well on its way to bolstering biosecurity in Queensland. We continue to train and prepare people across the state, and the staff we promised to be deployed across Queensland have been signed on. Eight new staff across regional Queensland will further mobilise our biosecurity capabilities. We must be vigilant. It is thanks to people on the ground who notice and notify our biosecurity officers across our state and the nation. They are the people who are our frontline defence against all manner of threats to our agricultural industry. I am proud of the commitment and work of my department and our industry partners in ensuring Queensland is as prepared as it could possibly be.