




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

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LAND AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (4.43 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Firstly, I want to commend my good friend the resources minister for bringing this legislation before the House. I also want to thank the members of the Transport and Resources Committee, including the chair, the member for Kurwongbah, for their hard work in making sure we get this legislation right.

As Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries, there is one aspect of the bill that I am particularly pleased to speak in support of today. The bill makes important amendments to the Stock Route Management Act to improve the recovery of costs for local governments that manage and administer the network—a series of roads, reserves and corridors that crisscross the state, allowing drovers to move and feed up to 330,000 head of stock all over Queensland each year. These arteries of rural and regional Queensland stretch from the Northern Territory border in the north-west to the New South Wales border in the Scenic Rim. From Bamaga to Barcaldine to Birdsville, these stock routes are a quiet superhighway system that keeps our stock moving and provides feed in times of drought.

This bill is making sure local governments can retain permit fees and other charges collected in the process of managing the stock route network within their boundaries. This is a more streamlined and direct way to fund the management and maintenance of Queensland's 72,000 kilometres of stock routes. For the drovers, graziers and landholders who rely upon them, this will mean a better stock route network. Last year I had the pleasure of joining the resources minister to announce \$1 million worth of investment into our vital stock route network—an investment in our booming agricultural sector, the good jobs it sustains and the food it produces for both Queensland and the world; an investment that allows eight councils from the McKinlay shire in the north to the Balonne shire in the south to carry out maintenance and capital projects.

Extensive consultation has been undertaken by our government on stock route reforms since 2018. AgForce, the Local Government Association of Queensland and the Queensland Law Society are all in favour of our proposed changes. To put it simply, the Palaszczuk government is backing Queensland farmers and this bill is further evidence that we listen to our rural communities and stakeholders to make necessary changes, because that is what good governments do. As always, the Palaszczuk government is taking care of business in the bush. This bill improves the administrative process for listing regional ecosystems under the Vegetation Management Act. A certified online database is where regional ecosystems and their conservation classification will be listed rather than through schedules to the Vegetation Management Regulation.

I wonder if those opposite know how to classify mulga. That certainly was not the case in 2018 when they tried to mislead farmers about it when the LNP fed the rumour mill by claiming that farmers would not be able to push mulga to feed stock. Those opposite made sure that these wild claims were not in the interests of farmers but in their own interests of trying to secure votes rather than telling the truth to rural and regional Queenslanders, causing undue stress for farmers who already had a drought

to worry about, adding LNP misinformation onto the pile. The then natural resources, mines and energy minister Dr Anthony Lynham called this behaviour 'irresponsible', and I could not agree more. The fact is Queensland farmers were then, and still are now, able to push mulga to feed their stock. They are still able to self-assess mulga harvesting to make sure that their animals get the feed they need, particularly in times of drought. Ultimately, farmers who would like any guidance on vegetation management can call 135VEG. Do not bother calling the LNP. With that short contribution, I commend the bill to the House.