




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Drought Declarations; Agriculture Industry

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (10.09 am): The Palaszczuk government is supporting primary producers with drought assistance. With our recent reforms, we are assisting producers right now to prepare for future droughts. By supporting a strong agricultural sector, our government is supporting good jobs for Queenslanders.

Today, I have some good news for primary producers regarding drought. Based on recommendations from local drought committees, after significant rain and pasture growth, I am revoking the drought status for more areas of Queensland. From 1 March, the LGAs of Rockhampton, Central Highlands, Woorabinda, Barcoo and the eastern part of Barcaldine will no longer be drought-declared. I table an updated copy of the Queensland drought map.

Tabled paper: Map, dated 1 March 2023, titled 'Queensland drought situation as reviewed on 1 March 2023' [196](#).

The drought-declared area of Queensland will drop from 38.1 per cent of the state to 27.8 per cent. That is below 30 per cent for the first time since 2013. Conversely, just six years ago, 87.5 per cent of Queensland was drought-declared. Indeed, large parts of Queensland remain in drought, some for almost a decade, having a major impact on primary producers. Thanks to our government's groundbreaking reforms, farmers both in and out of drought-declared areas can access assistance through my department.

At this point, I would also like to express my thanks on record for the work of the late Vaughan Johnson as a drought commissioner. He did a sterling job for Queensland and also in his capacity as Drought Commissioner.

I am also pleased to announce today the first round of the Rural Agricultural Development Grants have been allocated, totalling \$1.8 million. Ten agriculture businesses will receive co-contribution grants of up to \$200,000 to make expansion projects a reality, creating 77 jobs for Queenslanders in places like Quilpie and Richmond. I can also announce that applications for round 2 of the RAD Grants open today as well.

There's more! I am pleased to announce the launch of the Queensland AgTech Roadmap draft for consultation. I table a copy of that.

Tabled paper: Queensland government document, undated, titled 'Queensland AgTech Roadmap 2023-2028, Draft for consultation' [197](#).

It will help agribusinesses stay at the forefront of the digital revolution. We want Queensland to be a global destination for AgTech. I encourage everyone to go to the DAF website to check out the roadmap. Queensland farmers have no greater friend in this House than the Palaszczuk Government.