




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

Record of Proceedings, 15 March 2023

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

North-West Queensland Floods

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (9.59 am): I rise to speak on the devastating floods that are impacting the north-west region of our state, particularly the hardship faced by our primary producers. The death of livestock and damage to property caused by weather events like these is confronting and it is a threat to the livelihoods of our primary producers. The images we are currently seeing in the media reminded me of the monsoonal event that affected the Flinders area west of Townsville in 2019.

The Palaszczuk government stands with our rural communities, particularly in times like these. My department is contacting farmers directly and putting call-outs on social media for primary producers to let us know what they need. We are coordinating emergency fodder drops, and my department is contacting farmers to let them know how they can have it dropped to them. I am pleased to announce that the Albanese and Palaszczuk governments have activated category B disaster funding arrangements. Primary producers and small businesses in the local government areas of Burke, Carpentaria, Cloncurry, Doomadgee, Mornington Island and Mount Isa can now apply for concessional loans of up to \$250,000 to repair or replace damaged buildings, plant, equipment or livestock. They can also apply for up to \$100,000 for working capital to keep business going as they recover. Further assessments are underway to determine whether higher levels of disaster assistance funding will be made available.

I would like to thank the federal minister for emergency management, Murray Watt, his department and my department for the swift work undertaken to get these arrangements in place. Category B funding is being administered by the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority. I encourage all affected primary producers in the north-west region to visit the QRIDA website or call 1800623946. Furthermore, affected primary producers can also access freight subsidies of up to \$5,000. Freight subsidies are administered by my department, and anyone who would like more information can contact 132523. The Palaszczuk government will continue to support all Queensland farmers, as we always do. I intend to visit the north-west region soon to speak directly with primary producers affected by this flooding event.