




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

Record of Proceedings, 28 November 2023

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Rural Economic Development Grants

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (10.07 am): The Palaszczuk Labor government takes pride in helping to deliver the infrastructure Queensland needs and creating good jobs along the way, particularly for our friends in the primary industries sector. A wonderful example of this is Rural Economic Development grants administered through the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority as part of my portfolio. These RED grants, which offer up to \$200,000 to fund projects which generate economic and also employment opportunities in primary production, have been very popular indeed.

Over the last five years these grants, started by this Palaszczuk Labor government, have provided \$13.3 million in funding to support 59 regional agribusiness projects, creating an estimated 2½ thousand new direct and indirect jobs. Our government's commitment to infrastructure extends throughout the entire state and RED grants are helping producers all over Queensland. We are providing funding for Oz Strawberries on the Sunshine Coast to expand their packing shed infrastructure and to build a coldroom; Ross Shearing in Barcaldine to service wool producers throughout Outback Queensland with a specially designed trailer; and Daintree Fresh in Lakeland in the member for Cook's electorate, which is using an upgraded packing facility to export fresh produce to Japan, which I saw and promoted just last week.

As the Minister for Rural Communities, I have to also mention that there is still more work to ensure regional Queensland gets the infrastructure it deserves. I share the disappointment of those on this side of the House at the federal government's announcement to cut infrastructure projects across Queensland. Our rural communities need Bruce Highway upgrades and many other great projects that Canberra appears to have put on the chopping block. Why should a rail loop in the heart of Melbourne have priority over regional roads? I am heartened to hear that the Queensland Farmers' Federation and other groups representing the agriculture industry will be accompanying the Deputy Premier as part of the 'Team Queensland' delegation to Canberra. They will do a fine job at communicating to Minister King just why rural and regional Queensland deserves our fair share of federal funding.