




Speech By
Jim McDonald

MEMBER FOR LOCKYER

Record of Proceedings, 21 March 2024

ADJOURNMENT

Warrego Highway; Horticulture Industry

 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (6.06 pm): It is a privilege to rise tonight to speak to two vitally important things for my community. The first is the Warrego Highway. I know that infrastructure is important for South-East Queensland to the north and south, but it is equally important to the west. Out to the west, the Warrego Highway is one of the major freight routes that is broken and cut every time it floods. To stop crashes occurring and to stop the flooding, let's see this piece of infrastructure built. I call on the minister to fund it in QTRIP in the next financial year. It will stop the flooding and stop the crashes.

When you go out west along the Warrego Highway and you look to the right and left, you see our beautiful produce. That is something to 'give a fork' about. Our farmers are really struggling in the Lockyer; in fact, farmers right across Queensland are really struggling. Growers' input costs have risen between 30 per cent and 65 per cent over the last three years. Nationally they have increased by 37 per cent. That is so much. Those input costs, whether they be fertiliser, electricity, diesel or all of the other costs they are incurring, are just enormous. When you factor in that their production has reduced by a third, they are spending more to produce less. That again is something to 'give a fork' about.

I pay tribute to the Queensland Fruit and Vegetable Growers and in particular Rachel Chambers, who has done a wonderful job with her committee to run this beautiful and smart campaign. I have sought the advice and support of the Speaker to show members a very innovative way to 'give a fork' that you will see in all of our shops—thank you, Mr Speaker. I urge everyone to tell their kids when they go to the shops to look for the Australian grown and Queensland grown produce, because if they buy Queensland grown, if they buy Australian grown, then our farmers will be secure and our families will be secure.

Every time people avoid buying Queensland grown or Australian grown produce, the threat of fewer kids going to school in our smaller communities increases. It means fewer people will be working in the shops in our smaller communities. It is a slide we do not want to see happen. Please, give a fork! Listen to what the growers are saying and go and buy great Queensland fruit and vegies. Queensland provides fruit for a third of the Australian market—that is incredible—but we are also the second highest state in vegetable production. The Lockyer Valley is the food bowl of South-East Queensland. We provide food to the nation, we provide food to the world, and we want to continue to do that. We need to ensure our national sovereignty, so please 'give a fork' and buy Queensland and Australian grown produce.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): Before you resume your seat, member, after consultation with the Clerk, I rule that substitution of words for other words that would otherwise be unparliamentary are out of order, so I ask you to withdraw any unparliamentary language.

Mr McDONALD: Thank you. I appreciate the guidance, Mr Deputy Speaker. I withdraw.