



Speech By  
**Hon. Mark Furner**


**MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE**

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Record of Proceedings, 6 March 2024

**MOTION**

**Cost of Living, Select Committee**

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (6.00 pm): I rise to speak to this motion, to which an amendment has been moved by the member for Gladstone. This government has made significant inroads when it comes to supporting our primary industries sector. We have done this by supporting our farmers, supporting our consumers and supporting workers everywhere.

The member for Nanango's motion sought to look at big supermarket grocery prices. Unlike the talk of those opposite, we as a government—a miles Labor government—have acted. We have already started. In fact, it was a pleasure to join Premier Miles and the Minister for State Development in meetings earlier this year with the supermarkets—Woolworths, Coles and Aldi—at which cost-of-living impacts were directly raised. What happened? Prices came down, down, down as a result of that engagement with those supermarkets. That is what the Labor government does. We engage with people about the problems that affect Queenslanders to make sure we reduce the cost of living.

When it comes to making a difference, we as a government make a meaningful difference each and every day in supporting our farmers, and by helping our farmers we help Queensland families. I want to give some examples in the short time I have available.

**Ms Bates** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order, member for Mudgeeraba! Your interjections are not being taken.

**Mr FURNER:** Funding has supported 59 successful regional agribusiness projects worth more than \$52.4 million. That funding comes from the RED Grants, the Rural Economic Development Grants, that this government proudly put in place. Over the past five years the RED Grants program has provided a total of \$13.3 million in funding, supporting our farmers once again. Do those opposite hear that? We are supporting our farmers. If we reflect on the member for Nanango's motion, not once did it mention our farmers here in Queensland. It had to come from the member for Logan and the member for Pumicestone to mention farmers, because this mob opposite have turned their back on the farmers of Queensland.

**Mr Perrett** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, member for Gympie!

**Mr Boothman** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Theodore, you are warned.

**Mr FURNER:** The RED Grants projects I mentioned before supported 2,500 jobs.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on two issues. I would like to listen to the record, but I am quite sure I said the word 'farmers' in my contribution. If the member is misleading the House, I will be writing to you.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** That is not a point of order.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** My second point is that I take personal offence and I ask the minister to withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member has taken personal offence. I ask you to withdraw.

**Mr FURNER:** I withdraw. Once again, those RED Grants projects have supported 2,500 jobs—real jobs in rural Queensland. Those grants directly assist farmers, and that helps our economy with productivity boosts. QRIDA is a great organisation. They are there day in and day out with First Start Loans and sustainability loans that assist our farmers of the future and the producers of today, and also of tomorrow, to ensure their properties are as productive as they can be.

As everyone knows, in agriculture we need to be at the forefront of technology. I want to turn to some of the technology that we see out in the field. The member for Lockyer would know Troy Qualischefski quite well. In fact, he is a good friend of this government. I enjoy going to Troy's property quite often. Troy has invested in technology to improve productivity and to reduce costs by using the technology of tomorrow today. It is great to see that technology come through on the back of AgTech Smart Farms. Whether they be out at Gatton or out at Emerald, farmers are following the lead of the Miles Labor government because they understand the future. They understand the future ahead of them by investing in AgTech. Those behind are still trying to work out how to invent the wheel. When it comes to farmers, we are backing Queensland farmers to the hilt.

Once again, climate change is at the forefront of farmers' minds currently. That is why we launched our low-emissions road map. I want to put on record my congratulations to AgForce but also the Queensland Farmers' Federation for supporting that. When you look at the ambitious GDP that we are responsible for, it is \$24.44 billion. That is a strong contribution from this Labor government in supporting our farmers for the future.

The LNP and its leader do not measure up when it comes to agriculture. Their pint-sized policies do not help our primary industries. Only Labor will make a difference when it comes to cost of living and supporting our Queensland farmers. That has always been the case and always will be in Queensland. We will deliver for them in the future.