




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

Record of Proceedings, 2 May 2024

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Fire Ants; Cost of Living, Electricity Rebate

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (2.09 pm): I recognise the professionalism, competence and work of the men and women of the National Fire Ant Eradication Program, particularly last weekend at Oakey air base where they eradicated about 80 nests and then retreated those nests as a result of their condition. I extend my condolences to the family and friends of a long-serving public servant and team member who passed away over the weekend.

The good thing about this announcement is that no more nests have been detected. Once again, like many other times when we have treated nests with DNI, direct nest injection, they have been eradicated. I also extend my appreciation to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, Richard Marles, for taking my phone call during the week and to our fantastic, hardworking federal agriculture minister, Senator Murray Watt, who discussed this issue, particularly with regard to the complications of being on a defence base and dealing with a state jurisdiction.

Once again, these sorts of incursions have nothing to do with the conduct of the Queensland government or the program, but human assisted movement. In this case, I believe that it was a turf farm in the south-east corner that supplied turf to the defence base some years ago that spread the ants. That is why we have upped the ante in terms of regulations in dealing with this type of human assisted movement. One would think that that were not the case when we hear from those opposite. They should start their contributions with 'once upon a time', because what they deliver in this chamber are fairytales, regardless of whether it is on this issue or anything else.

What gets me is that this is a national program and one would think that the members of the Nationals opposite would certainly understand what national means, but that is not the case.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr FURNER: You would have to be an oxygen thief not to understand what national means. Once again, I appreciate that they are a bit behind the wheel when it comes to being Nationals, but they should understand what it stands for. No doubt, those interjecting are oxygen thieves. Members of the LNP come into this chamber and misrepresent the program. Only those on this side of chamber represent and understand our hardworking public servants. That is why we look after those public servants. On this side of the House, we are taking \$1,000 off the power bills of hardworking Queenslanders. Unlike those opposite, we will make sure that we look after Queenslanders and the public servants of Queensland.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, you used some unparliamentary language in that contribution. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr FURNER: I withdraw.