




Speech By  
**Hon. Mark Furner**

**MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE**

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Record of Proceedings, 14 June 2024

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; REVENUE  
AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL; STATE FINANCIAL  
INSTRUCTIONS AND METWAY MERGER AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (11.40 am): The state budget handed down by the Treasurer on Tuesday is an outstanding Labor budget, one well suited to today's economic climate. It is a budget that provides the most comprehensive cost-of-living support ever delivered by a Queensland government. This means across-the-board cost-of-living support for Queensland families to help them pay the bills and balance the household budget.

There are massive power bill rebates, significantly reduced public transport fares, cheaper car registration and more support for first home buyers. These are just some of the key features of this budget. These crucial initiatives are designed to help Queensland households address the national cost-of-living pressures the whole country is facing.

The budget delivers a massive \$1,000 cut to every Queensland household's electricity bill, rising to \$1,300 when the Commonwealth rebate is factored in. Commuters are also big winners, with all public transport fares, irrespective of their length, to be slashed to 50 cents from August. I know firsthand that this will deliver drastic savings to the many commuters in Ferny Grove who rely on public transport to get around.

For those whose transport is the family car, the state budget delivers a 20 per cent reduction in the cost of car registration. With so many young families in my electorate of Ferny Grove, I am also pleased that the state budget provides \$200 FairPlay vouchers for 200,000 Queensland kids. This is also a budget which seeks to bring home ownership within reach of more Queenslanders. The budget raises the stamp duty free threshold for first home buyers to \$700,000, assisting more people to get on the home ownership ladder.

One of the main reasons we are able to deliver this unprecedented cost-of-living support through the state budget is simple. It is because the Miles Labor government has taken on the multinational mining companies. We have stood up to these companies to ensure that Queenslanders get a fair price for the natural resources which they own. Make no mistake: the LNP is a real threat to the progressive coal mining royalties, which help to underpin our cost-of-living budget measures. The LNP would have allowed superprofits to be sent offshore instead of into the pockets of Queensland families where they are needed most, yet we know that cuts are hardwired into the DNA of the LNP. We all saw the member for Broadwater's train wreck media conference last week when he professed to offer his support for this budget despite not having seen it. Since then, we have witnessed the sorry spectacle of the member for Broadwater attempting to walk back his commitment after the inevitable backlash from the LNP rank and file. How can Queenslanders trust anything the member for Broadwater says? Never!

The member for Broadwater supported the LNP's cuts when he sat around Campbell Newman's cabinet table. When last in office—

**Mr Crandon** interjected.

**Mr FURNER:**—the LNP sacked 45 workers from the Fire Ant Eradication Program—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Pause the clock. Member for Coomera, if you are going to interject you need to be in your correct seat, otherwise I will warn you.

**Mr FURNER:** When last in office the LNP sacked 45 workers from the Fire Ant Eradication Program—

**Mr Crandon** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Coomera, that was not an invitation to start interjecting straightaway. You are warned under the standing orders.

**Mr FURNER:** Thank you for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker. When last in office the LNP sacked 45 workers from the Fire Ant Eradication Program and halved its funding, cutting \$4 million. What a shameful legacy, and one which would continue under any future LNP government.

The member for Broadwater has displayed his abject ignorance about agriculture in his budget reply speech with the brief remarks he made on this crucial industry. It is an absolute insult to our farmers to suggest ag tech has not been successfully used by Queensland farmers and reflects poorly on those making that claim. I do not know where he was at Beef 2024. Maybe he missed the copious numbers of ag tech stalls on display there. He must have walked straight past them.

I have seen firsthand the tremendous results Queensland farmers such as Gatton producer Troy Qualischefski are delivering through ag tech. This clearly demonstrates that the member for Broadwater has never understood primary industries or the regions. It is probably telling in terms of the reason the member for Broadwater jumped ship from Mundingburra to Broadwater. For the record, this state budget includes almost \$180 million for agri-science related initiatives.

I am also pleased that this first budget of the new Miles government delivers for my electorate of Ferny Grove. It includes new funding for several schools, which will be welcomed by many families in the electorate. There is \$8.3 million in 2024-25 to deliver a new hall facility at Oakleigh State School. There is also \$878,000 next financial year allocated across 11 schools in the Ferny Grove electorate for maintenance works. There is \$188,000 in 2024-25 for stage 2 of Patricks Road State School's community hub project, with a total commitment of \$400,000 and \$150,000 for a new access ramp to the oval at Ferny Hills State School. Ferny Hills State School will also receive \$18,000 in 2024-25 out of a \$149,000 total spend for school playground and tuckshop upgrades. I want to thank the education minister for her commitment to schools not just in Ferny Grove but right across Queensland.

For all the golfers in the electorate who are keen to snare their first hole in one, the budget allocates more than \$168,000 in 2024-25 to Keperra Country Golf Club to upgrade tee blocks and install irrigation. The budget delivers a record amount totalling almost \$715 million for initiatives to strengthen our agricultural and fisheries industries. Honourable members need only read my department's Service Delivery Statements in the budget papers to see how much the Miles Labor government is delivering for these sectors.

The Speaker has reviewed and approved my budget speech for incorporation. As such, I ask that the remainder of my speech be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*.

*The speech read as follows—*

The Budget funds a wide range of initiatives, which include:

- \$20 million over 4 years from the \$30 million Backing Bush Communities Fund towards Invasive Species Management and Workforce Training. This funding will build rural and regional capacity and resilience to proactively manage biosecurity threats and upskill Queensland's agricultural workforce.
- \$7.3 million over 5 years for Dangerous Dogs Laws to make our communities safer by promoting responsible dog ownership and supporting implementation of stronger dog laws to achieve more coordinated, consistent and effective government action in response to dog attacks.
- \$6.5 million over 4 years and \$1.6 million per annum ongoing to strengthen the department's leadership across Queensland's and Australia's biosecurity systems including prosecutorial, enforcement, investigative and intelligence capabilities.
- \$3.3 million in 2024-25 for Round 7 of the Rural Economic Development Grants program to increase regional employment and agribusiness development in regional Queensland.
- \$2.4 million in additional funding over 3 years for the collective action to manage Varroa destructor.

Speaker, I'm particularly proud that this Budget includes funding to nearly double the number of FTE staff within biosecurity services, from 626 to 1,314.

As I've said previously, these funds will assist our efforts in the fight against fire ants and help implement the stronger dangerous dog laws we have passed to protect Queenslanders.

We have a proud track record on this side of the House when it comes to funding and growing Queensland's biosecurity capability.

Since Labor came to office in 2015, biosecurity funding has nearly tripled from \$108 million a year to almost \$300 million a year.

I'm also pleased that the Budget includes \$3.3 million in 2024-25 for Round 7 of the Rural Economic Development Grants program.

This outstanding program is very well-regarded in many regional communities and enhances employment opportunities while stimulating agribusiness development in regional Queensland.

As I said in the House yesterday, there is just so much in this Budget for ag and fisheries.

There's \$1.6 million to upgrade the Wild Dog Barrier Fence.

\$1.4 million to upgrade infrastructure and equipment at Gatton Smart Farm to support horticulture, productivity and profitability.

Continued support of smart farms dedicated to advancing Australia's agriculture and food industries through the AgTech Roadmap 2023-2028.

Support for the Fresh and Secure Trade Alliance program to help protect and grow Australia's horticultural exports.

The Budget also supports our ongoing efforts to help Queensland producers prepare for future droughts.

And, of course, there's support for the swimmer safety through our Shark Control Program while advancing research into innovative shark mitigation technologies and boosting community education efforts.

Speaker, this is an outstanding Budget that delivers on cost of living for Queenslanders.

It's a Budget which continues to build the infrastructure our growing State needs.

And it's a Budget that delivers for Queensland's clean and sustainable agriculture and fisheries industries.

I commend the Bill to the House.