




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

Record of Proceedings, 26 August 2025

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE, REPORT

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (8.31 pm): I rise to speak on the Primary Industries and Resources Committee estimates report. In doing so I indicate to you, Madam Deputy Speaker, that I have probably over 1,000 hours of estimates hearings under my belt both from the Senate and from this House. I have seen some highs and I have seen some lows, but the last estimates program was probably the lowest I have ever seen.

I want to refer particularly to the primary industries sector hearings. We first heard a dixer from the member for Burnett to the member for Gympie. He asked about the Fire Ant Suppression Taskforce, which was introduced by Labor. We funded \$37 million into that program, but the LNP government could not even match that and only put in \$24 million. In his answer, the member for Gympie referred to the Invasive Species Council and promoted them somehow in commending what the government was doing. One only needs to turn to recent reports from the ABC—and I will table those shortly—to know of the fire ants detected at Broadmeadow coalmine up near Moranbah and, more recently, spreading to a further five mines.

The Invasive Species Council is really concerned about what is happening with this failed government program in terms of fire ants and what they have done. It has spread that far. We never had that when we were managing the program. Therefore, it demonstrates their ineptitude with regard to dealing with this problem.

Furthermore, the member for Gympie demonstrated his ineptitude and also his blatant plagiarism when referring to documents of the fire ant program. I know the member for Gympie has never understood that this is a national program. He still continues to advocate that it is not a national program. I want to table the minutes of the national program where it states—

... a seasonal bait trial was initiated in 2023 to assess the efficacy of the IGR treatment during the winter months compared to the warmer months and to explore options for reducing the eradication period. The trial will be completed in early 2024.

A trial of the feasibility of using bait in a wettable matrix will be undertaken in early 2024 to determine if this can support treatment during the summer rainy season.

Tabled paper: Bundle of media articles from ABC News online regarding the detection of fire ants at Broadmeadow Coal Mine [1117](#).

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'National Fire Ant Eradication response update' [1118](#).

Therefore, the program was implemented when Labor was in government; however, the Minister for Primary Industries tried to imply that the Crisafulli government had somehow introduced this in its term of government. It was a demonstration of pure plagiarism. He took someone else's work and tried to advocate for its being a success of this government. For someone who has been in this House for many years and should know better, it is a horrendous, outrageous, slanderous and scurrilous attitude to take.

I will be writing to the member for Burnett, the chair of the committee, with regard to the blatant plagiarism that the member delivered to the committee during the estimates hearings in trying to advocate that this was their work. I have clearly demonstrated today through the documentation I have tabled where this program sits. I will further table a document from the National Management Group that advocates for the overall incursion of fire ants right across the nation.

Tabled paper: Webpage titled 'National Management Group for the National Fire Ant Eradication Program' [1119](#).

One would think a member of the National Party would understand what 'national' means, but that is not the case in this regard. These are not AI generated words. These are the words spoken by a minister of the Crown who is supposed to be here protecting one of the best commodities of this state—our primary industries. He is failing, once again. He failed in opposition and he is failing now in government. The minister should hang his head in shame in terms of what he is doing in this respect.

A government member: 'Mr Red Fire Ant'.

Mr FURNER: Here we go! Once again, all of those documents which I have tabled and the dates show that the program was initiated under the national program when Labor was in government. It is not a program that is controlled by the Queensland government. It is a program that is cost funded nationally by every state and every territory, including the Commonwealth, and run by the national—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr O'Shea): Order! The time for debate on the report has expired.