



Speech By
Patrick Weir

MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE

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ADJOURNMENT

Women in Agriculture

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (7.13 pm): They say that behind every great man is an even greater woman. This statement could not be more true than in the world of agriculture and for rural women everywhere. The International Day of Rural Women was celebrated on Monday, 15 October. There did not appear to be much fanfare or publicity about this special day. Rural women mostly did what that they do best every day: work in the paddock, the laboratory, the office or anywhere their particular agricultural pathway has taken them.

Rural women, no matter where they live, are strong, independent people who at times have to juggle running a household, bringing up children, organising the finances, keeping the books, working either on-farm or off-farm and keeping the home fires burning for their partners. Without them, we would be lost. They are the backbone of their family and often their community, giving selflessly of themselves at all times, day and night.

The agricultural sector offers a great diversity of employment opportunities, and women are strongly represented in all sectors. Women work in their own rural businesses or are employed in the areas of agribusiness, research, media, cropping, animal husbandry, horticulture, sales and education, to name just a few. When I was farming I had a female agronomist, Belinda Chase, who was both extremely professional and passionate about what she did. I appreciated her dedication to my farming enterprise and the agriculture industry as a whole and her enthusiasm for being a woman in agriculture.

Women, generally speaking, are often overlooked to be at the helm of companies or organisations. In agriculture, this was also the case; however, now there has been a turning of the tide, even in my local area, with the first ever female president of the Darling Downs Cotton Growers Association, Georgie Krieg. Fiona Simpson is the president of the National Farmers' Federation. Simone Jolliffe is the president of the Australian Dairy Farmers. Ruth Wade is the commissioner and chair of the GasFields Commission and a former CEO of the Queensland Farmers' Federation. Georgie Somerset is the general president of AgForce. These are just a few of the women directing the future of agriculture.

I have had the good fortune to know many women in rural Queensland, starting from my days as a young boy growing up watching my mother support my father in his farming pursuits, often having to help run the tractor down the paddock or help repair a gate—all this while raising me and my five siblings, ensuring there was always a positive word every night, no matter how dry it was in the paddock, cooking and helping us with our schoolwork. That support was a great comfort to all of us growing up.

The contribution women all over the world make to agriculture and the rural communities they live in is extraordinary. I, for one, am very proud to have the opportunity to acknowledge that tonight.