



Speech by

**KEN TURNER**

**MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA**

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Hansard 17 September 1998

**MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES**

**Mr TURNER** (Thuringowa—ONP) (6.44 p.m.): I am appalled to think that a Minister of the Crown taking advice from power-drunk bureaucrats would make such a misguided and inflammatory statement as that made by the Minister for Emergency Services this morning in relation to the Fire and Rescue Authority. The Fire and Rescue Authority board was formed to take political interference out of the decision-making process. From our discussions with numerous people, ranging from a high-ranking board member right through to firemen out in the field, we are convinced that morale and efficiency under the leadership of chief Wayne Hartley is extremely high—or at least it was until the ill-informed outburst in the House this morning.

The Labor Government is obsessed with bureaucratic control and the notion that the service can be improved by the injection of a lot more bureaucrats and bureaucratic control. If this trend is continued we will have a fire service with a whole lot of chiefs and no Indians—and nobody who knows how to strike a match. The service is presently manned by a legion of highly motivated, highly skilled and practical firemen who have an excellent level of morale. Why would we want to destroy that structure? In fact, the service has done well to survive the studious neglect by both sides of the political spectrum. The alleged economic crisis has been manufactured by projecting the current funding level out five years.

The situation has been compounded because Labor passed responsibility for road accident rescue to the service but neglected to provide additional funding. When the Government changed from Labor to the coalition, the coalition also neglected to provide funding. Naturally, if responsibilities are enlarged and funding is not, problems will eventually arise. However, to attempt to restructure such an efficient organisation as the fire service just to pander to a Government's desire for an overwhelming imbalance of bureaucracy is absurd. The Minister's comments this morning were an insult to the service and have damaged morale. One Nation supports the vote of confidence in the current Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority board.

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