Speech by

Hon. S. ROBERTSON

MEMBER FOR STRETTON

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
Fire Detection Website

Hon. S. ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines) (10.06 a.m.), by leave: With ongoing dry conditions making much of the state tinderbox dry, Queensland faces what potentially could be the worst bushfire season in a decade. My Department of Natural Resources and Mines has recently developed a new fire detection website that will further bolster the capability of Queensland's fire and emergency services to respond to this worsening bushfire situation. The website will assist Queensland's rural fire service to quickly locate and track active fires throughout the state. It will also be used by land-holders, natural resource managers and the Australian Defence Force.

Information on the website is generated by NR&M's satellite-receiving station at Indooroopilly in Brisbane, which processes images acquired from three United States satellites that pass over Queensland up to 12 times a day. The satellite information is very accurate and, during trials of the system last year, false alarms were rare and only a few very small fires went undetected. Developed by the NR&M and DPI Queensland Centre for Climate Applications, the website allows users to overlay additional information such as shire boundaries, major roads and towns which will assist in pinpointing fires more quickly and with greater accuracy. The department also offers subscribers a free automated email service that will alert them to fires within their nominated geographical area of interest. The email message includes a 'shape' file that allows subscribers with GIS software to overlay property boundaries, roads and infrastructure.

Describing the website as a strategic rather than a tactical fire-fighting tool, the commissioner for rural operations of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority, Dave Luxton, says that the website will be particularly useful in dealing with fires in remote areas. Commissioner Luxton says that the existence of 'hot spots' can be relayed quickly to district fire inspectors who will be able to alert affected land-holders to fires they would otherwise be unaware of. The website will help to protect not only property but also biodiversity. Fire helps maintain the ecological health of much of Queensland's vegetation resources. However, out-of-control wildfires are highly destructive. The website will also be used to monitor the effectiveness of strategic aerial burning as part of a Natural Heritage Trust-funded project in the Cape York Peninsula aimed at controlling late dry season wildfires. This satellite mapping system is another example of this government utilising Smart State technology to assist our emergency services respond to the scourge of bushfire that threatens our state.

————————