



Speech by

Jason O'Brien

MEMBER FOR COOK

Hansard Wednesday, 31 October 2007

COOK ELECTORATE, RURAL FIRE BRIGADES

Mr O'BRIEN (Cook—ALP) (11.51 am): Today I would like to pay tribute to our volunteers in the rural fire brigade and to report on a couple of incidents in my electorate. The community of Koah is in the southern part of my electorate situated between Kuranda and Mareeba. For the last two weeks there have been significant bushfires in the area, and the volunteers of the Koah rural fire brigade and the adjoining Myola and Speewah brigades have been doing a tremendous job in protecting life, property, livestock and crops in the area. I would like to thank them for their efforts.

Last Friday, accompanied by the member for Barron River, I caught up with the members of the brigades in order to find out how they have been faring and to buy them a few much-earned beers. After nearly two weeks in the fray, I can report that they looked tired but spoke of their resolve to continue the fight and protect their community. I think these people show the true essence of what it is to be an Australian. As is reported, when the member for Barron River and I were there, there were still spot fires and the brigades were still fighting those spot fires. It looked like they probably had a few more days ahead of them in the field.

The following day I went to the Daintree to officially dedicate the Thornton Peak rural fire brigade's new fire shed. They are a bit luckier than Koah in a sense because the rainforest area lessens the impact of fire compared with their colleagues in Koah. Nevertheless, they had an enthusiastic brigade in a high state of readiness. Congratulations to the brigade on its new facilities. I look forward to working with them over the next few years to continue to improve the brigade headquarters and the services that they can offer out of those headquarters.