



Speech by

**Andrew Powell**

**MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE**

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## **DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (3.45 pm): I rise to speak in the debate on the Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. The legislation seeks to achieve a number of outcomes. It will enshrine the accepted principles of disaster management in legislation. It will clarify, through an ability to enter into agreement with local government, the respective roles of state and local governments in the support of SES units. It will allow the chief executive of the Department of Community Safety to create new SES units.

As advised by the independent review of the disaster management arrangements in Queensland, this bill also revises existing positions and creates new positions with regard to the three levels of disaster management—specifically the roles of the state disaster coordinator, the state recovery coordinator and the local disaster coordinator. The legislation also makes amendments to the processes for declaring a disaster situation and for responding to disasters by establishing temporary disaster districts.

All of these changes appear sensible and will hopefully allow local disaster management groups on the coast and in Glass House to better respond to incidents in the area. We have our fair share. Whether it is flash flooding after torrential downpours, landslides on the Peachester or Blackall ranges or fires in the Conondale and Bellthorpe state forests, we in Glass House rely heavily on our SES volunteers.

The minister mentioned in his second reading speech—and it is reiterated in the explanatory notes—that the bill will also reflect current practice by confirming that it is the chief executive of the Department of Community Safety who has responsibility for the safe and efficient function of the SES. It is the chief executive of DCS who also ensures local controllers of SES units carry out their functions.

As speakers before me have and as the minister himself previously acknowledged, there were two outstanding members of my local SES units in Glass House who recently hung up their orange suits. Firstly, there was Graham Cheal. When one meets Graham one will meet a humble, unassuming man. What one will not realise is that he has been the backbone of the Glasshouse Mountains SES unit for the past three decades and the man who has been at the forefront of mountain rescues on the coast for more than four decades.

Under Graham's leadership, a role he has held since 1983, the unit has become the pacesetter in on-mountain vertical rescue operations. His SES group has also actively supported the Queensland Cancer Council fundraising campaign for the past 23 years. His community-mindedness and quiet confidence on the mountains has seen Graham and his unit duly recognised on a number of occasions.

Graham is the recipient of the National Medal, a group bravery citation and the Emergency Service Medal. In receiving his ESM, Graham, true to style, humbly acknowledged his colleagues. He said—

I'm really honoured to receive the medal, but it's the group as a whole that really deserve it. Without the group, an individual is not much good. I've been involved in mountain rescue for 43 years now, but the guy who has been here the shortest period of time still gives 110%.

Graham will remain a bastion of the Glass House Mountains community but he will sorely be missed by the Glasshouse Mountains SES unit.

Secondly, we farewelled and lost the services of another SES stalwart in Lloyd Larney of Maleny. Lloyd is one of those guys who is in everything. He was an SES group leader, a scout leader, a deputy fire warden and the coordinator of the local Neighbourhood Watch, which he has run for 16 years. Again, rightly, he has been recognised for his community activities, receiving the National Medal with first and second clasps, a Centenary Medal in 2001 and Caloundra Citizen of the Year in 2004. But perhaps the culmination was the Medal of the Order of Australia, or OAM, last year.

When I was campaigning last year I knocked on the Larneys' door a number of times. I had the pleasure of meeting Shirley, Lloyd's equally capable wife, but had trouble pinning Lloyd down. I now understand why. But I was not alone. When the media tried to contact him and congratulate him on his OAM, he was on duty at the Conondale motorbike ride. That is just Lloyd. If this legislation ensures that men like Graham and Lloyd are freed up to do what they do best—protecting our communities—then it has my support. If it also ensures that we have future generations of individuals of the calibre of Lloyd and Graham joining and remaining committed to the SES, then it is to be commended.