



Speech By  
**Hon. Mark Ryan**


**MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD**

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Record of Proceedings, 30 November 2016

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Emergency Services Personnel; Bushfire Preparedness**

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (2.39 pm): Firstly, I wish to pay my respects to the family and friends of rural firefighter Milton Brunton, who passed away on Russell Island on Monday night. I understand that he was off duty at the time. On another sad note, last week Queensland Fire and Emergency Services lost one of their senior firefighters, Jason Caswell, in a light aircraft crash in Rockhampton. I know that members of this House will join me in sending our thoughts and prayers to his family, friends and colleagues at this sad time.

With temperatures set to soar across much of the state in the coming days, our emergency services personnel are equipped and ready to swiftly respond to the threat of bushfires. The heat wave—up to 10 degrees above average in some areas this week—is expected to generate a very high to severe fire danger. I have been assured by Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner Katarina Carroll that front-line firefighters are ready for action. Extra crews are now on standby in areas of high risk. Firefighters have spent many months preparing for the summer bushfire season. Emergency services personnel are constantly and closely monitoring wildfire alert levels so that the resources, including water-bombing aircraft, can be immediately dispatched to communities in need and support crews on the ground.

In emergency services, preparation is crucial. For instance, Operation Cool Burn, which runs from April to August each year, is all about mitigation. It is about taking early action. I am advised that this year Operation Cool Burn was highly successful, with 122 hazard-reduction burns, 67 upgrades to firebreaks and around 150 public awareness campaigns for people living and working in at-risk communities.

Last week I visited the State Disaster Coordination Centre. It is maintained in a state of high operational readiness and is prepared for activation should disaster strike. Seven hundred highly trained personnel across government are ready to swiftly respond to emergencies.

I take this opportunity to commend all our emergency services personnel, the Rural Fire Service, SES, fire and rescue, Emergency Management, police and all our dedicated emergency services volunteers across Queensland. They are the front line when times are tough. Their job is not nine to five. Their job is often dangerous and undertaken in difficult conditions. Sadly, sometimes they see the human face of tragedy. That is when they show the depth of their commitment to their community. Their drive and dedication are inspiring. Queenslanders know that they can count on them in the best and worst of times. For that, we owe them all a huge debt of gratitude.