




Speech By
Hon. Craig Crawford

MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

Record of Proceedings, 2 May 2018

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, Personnel

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (10.04 am): Like all Queenslanders, I am in awe of the amazing heroes working in our emergency services. I agree wholeheartedly with the Premier's statements this morning about the recent floods and cyclones. In recent months, we have witnessed the terrible devastation and heartache caused by Queensland's severe weather. We have seen communities working together and our magnificent Fire and Emergency Services personnel putting their own safety at risk to protect the lives and property of Queenslanders. That is why this government is determined to ensure that QFES personnel have every tool and support they need to continue their world renowned work. It was this government which allocated record funding of \$675 million for QFES in 2017-18, including budgeted staffing for 3,280 full-time-equivalent personnel.

We have budgeted for extra fire appliances and communications equipment throughout the state. We have budgeted for a new Accelerated Rural Fire Service Fleet Program. We have budgeted for upgrades to auxiliary fire stations across our state. On top of this, the Premier promised during the election campaign to invest another \$29.5 million over the next four years to boost our Queensland Fire and Emergency Services numbers. This equates to an additional 100 firefighters and 12 communications officers across the state. These new officers will be deployed across Queensland, including in regional areas. This means more swiftwater rescue technicians to save people from floodwaters, more firefighters for property fires and road crash rescues and more fire communications officers to provide the critical coordination required to ensure all emergency services officers work together in their response efforts.

QFES will implement the government's election commitment by recruiting an additional 25 full-time firefighters this calendar year and another 25 firefighters each calendar year for the next three years. We are growing our ranks and everyone is welcome to apply, even members of this House. Members can start training at any time—just get to work on the beep test, the push-ups, the mechanical reasoning, the aptitude and the like. Firefighting is one of the most trusted professions in this country. On that scale of the most trusted professionals, firefighters are way up the top—and I do not need to remind members of where politicians are.

I can also advise that the QFES commissioner will determine the recruitment program for the 12 full-time fire communications officers. The QFES commissioner, Katarina Carroll, has very much welcomed the promise of extra resources for the service. There will be extensive discussions within QFES over the coming weeks and months about where these additional resources will be best placed in Queensland to serve the community. Queensland is often at the mercy of extreme weather events. This government understands just how vital it is that our entire state has the highly skilled Fire and Emergency Services personnel required to respond swiftly and effectively if and when disaster strikes.