




Speech By
Hon. Craig Crawford

MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

Record of Proceedings, 5 September 2018

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, Resources

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (10.09 am): I am pleased to put on the record that the first 25 of 100 new firefighter positions have been filled according to QFES's operational priorities as part of this government's commitment to growing our firefighting ranks. I advise the House that 11 new firefighter positions have been allocated to the north coast region, with five firefighters being stationed on the Sunshine Coast, four in Maryborough and two in Bundaberg. Another five are allocated to Toowoomba in the south-western region and one to Cairns in the Far North. I am advised that those positions have already been filled internally. I can also advise that the northern region will be bolstered by the arrival of eight brand new firefighters—seven of those to Townsville and one to Charters Towers—once they graduate from a recruit course in December.

Regional centres across Queensland are continuing to grow so it is only fitting that more front-line firefighting staff are sent to these areas to meet future demand. Those additional firefighters will go a long way towards bolstering our firefighter front line and we will continue working with the QFES Commissioner, Katarina Carroll, and other stakeholders regarding the deployment of the remaining positions, including firefighters and fire communications officers.

As I have outlined, eight of these new firefighters are currently taking part in a course with another 24 recruits who will bolster the QFES ranks in regional areas in positions vacated by attrition. Last week I spent some time with the 32 recruits and even took part in live fire drill training just like they will undergo throughout their training course at Lytton's Combined Emergency Services Academy. I congratulated the new recruits on being chosen from nearly 300 applicants. Almost all were existing auxiliaries, as you were once yourself, Mr Speaker. I reminded them why they should be very proud of the path they have chosen to protect the safety and wellbeing of Queenslanders.

During their 78 days of training those recruits will hone their skills in the way Queensland manages live fire behaviour, wildfire, road crash rescue, technical rescue and hazardous materials. They will graduate in December and will take up positions throughout regional Queensland, including Charters Towers, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Gladstone, Maryborough, Bundaberg and Ipswich. QFES expects the highest standards from our firefighters and this latest intake will help these communities prepare for, respond to and recover from any emergencies.