




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

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ADJOURNMENT

Weather Events, Bushfires

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (7.15 pm): I put on record my thanks to all Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and Disaster Management staff and volunteers involved in the recent response to the unprecedented bushfires that burnt across Queensland. As members will know, in late November and early December we witnessed horrendous fire conditions in Central Queensland. From standing in my backyard, I know how incredible the wind and heat were. I do not how to describe it, other than to say it was like standing in front of a fan-forced oven that was operating at full speed. The sky was full of smoke. Everything was so dull that it was surreal.

An unprecedented weather event, never seen before in Queensland's recorded history, contributed to the catastrophic fires. Record temperatures day after day, high winds and an extended dry season led to the perfect storm of bushfires. Despite the catastrophic conditions and thanks to fantastic teamwork and collaboration, QFES staff and volunteers were able to keep our communities safe. I cannot commend highly enough the staff and volunteers for their dedication to working in incredibly difficult conditions, with the safety of our community at the top of their minds. At the heart of what they achieved was fantastic teamwork and collaboration between the planes in the air and their support crews, the crews on the ground and those providing valuable information to keep on top of the situation. From potential disaster, they turned the situation around with excellent planning, collaboration, intelligence and experience. I know how grateful our local communities are for everything that they did during those intense days.

Fire and Emergency Services and Disaster Management staff and volunteers responded quickly to the bushfires surrounding Gracemere, Rockhampton and the caves communities and were successful in preventing significant damage and loss of life. Their dedication to public safety makes them an inspiration for us and all in the community. This is particularly true of our volunteers who sacrificed their free time to put others before themselves. On behalf of the entire community, I say a heartfelt thanks to all of the Fire and Emergency Services and Disaster Management staff and volunteers for their hard work. I also thank the Premier and Minister Crawford for their strong leadership.