




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

Record of Proceedings, 17 September 2019

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Bushfires, Binna Burra Lodge

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.55 am): The Palaszczuk Labor government is determined to help manage the impacts of the unprecedented bushfires our state has recently faced to ensure Queenslanders recover stronger than ever. While the Scenic Rim's iconic Binna Burra Lodge may have been destroyed by recent bushfires, I am pleased to report to the House that the spirit to rebuild is strong and resolute. Last week I toured the lodge site with Binna Burra chair Steve Noakes and Scenic Rim mayor, Councillor Greg Christensen. The aftermath of the fire was absolutely shocking: the landscape scarred, this beautiful and historic ecoresort burned to the ground. There were, however, surviving symbols of hope for the Binna Burra Lodge team.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DICK: I take the interjection. Every time the member for Everton opens his mouth, I am reminded of the quote from Mark Twain: 'Better to keep your mouth closed'—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Minister, I ask you to resume your ministerial statement.

Mr DICK:—'and be thought a fool than to open it and demonstrate it to everyone.' Let me say something about the dinner bell at Binna Burra Lodge.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Minister, I appreciate that you were taking an interjection. You took the interjection. I ask you to return to your ministerial statement. Members to my left will cease their interjections or members will be warned.

Mr DICK: Let me say something about the dinner bell at Binna Burra Lodge. The dinner bell at Binna Burra Lodge is a sign of hope; it is not a sign of politics. Anyone in this House or in this state who seeks to profit politically because of the tragedy—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, I have given some guidance. I ask you to return to the ministerial statement. I ask you not to stray from the factual and public information that we are seeking to put forward.

Mr DICK: Anyone who does so ought be condemned. There were symbols of hope for the Binna Burra Lodge including the iconic dinner bell, which we helped recover from the site to present to the staff and the Groom family, who started this iconic resort 86 years ago. I can report to the House how happy and how moved they were to see a sign of hope for the future of Binna Burra.

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Everton, you are warned under the standing orders. I give members formal notice that I have a short temper today. My back is playing up. You know what that means for the House.

Mr DICK: To support economic recovery efforts, my department will lead a task force to provide Binna Burra Lodge owners and staff with the assistance they need to get back on their feet. The task force met in Beechmont on Friday to discuss the extent of the damage, short-term actions to assist recovery and the long-term vision for Binna Burra. I am pleased to inform the House that a draft action plan has already been developed to propel these actions. This includes restoring road access and electricity, removing hazardous waste, obtaining water access and permits, fast-tracking planning approvals and repairing walking trails, and I know the Minister for Tourism Industry Development and her department are also working hard to support tourism industry recovery in the region.

The task force's immediate priority though and that of the lodge board is to ensure displaced staff have access to the support and opportunities they need. That is why tomorrow my department will host a workers transition session in Beechmont for Binna Burra staff. A number of important local tourism and hospitality employers on the Gold Coast will be promoting job opportunities, including Accor, the Mantra Group, Peppers, Spicers Retreats, Village Roadshow, Club Training Australia and nearby O'Reilly's resort, which has also been affected by the fires, and I want to thank all of them for contributing to this important work. Employment agencies will attend the session, as will state and federal agencies that can help with hardship payments and community support groups such as Red Cross, Lifeline and UnitingCare. Our cross-government approach to recovery is already making a difference and we will continue working with Binna Burra to help guide its path towards economic recovery and a positive and prosperous future.