




Speech By
Hon. Craig Crawford

MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Weather Events, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (9.56 am): The Palaszczuk government embodies strong leadership and never more so than during and after a disaster. In the past three months that leadership, especially through Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, has been tested and has not been found wanting. In that time, we have weathered unprecedented catastrophic bushfires, cyclones and a severe monsoon trough that has led to widespread flooding. We are committed to ensuring that the best possible disaster management arrangements are in place to ensure the safety and protection of all Queenslanders.

When the bushfire season hit early and hit hard last year, we had more than 3,000 QFES personnel—volunteers and staff—on the ground and behind the scenes working around the clock to battle bushfires. Then there was severe Tropical Cyclone Owen followed by Tropical Cyclone Penny. Hundreds of QFES personnel were on the ground when those cyclones crossed the coast respectively in late December and early January.

Now, North Queenslanders and our residents in the west are dealing with the aftermath of the severe monsoon trough that has dumped an incalculable amount of rain. More than 650 QFES personnel have been deployed to help and there have been more than 60 rescues. Our people have helped with more than 800 relocations and the SES alone has received more than 3,500 requests for help in Townsville.

From beginning to an often heartbreaking end, these events have required coordination, communication and, most critically, leadership. Part of that leadership is recognising the need for learning. Learning from such events will ensure that we have the best possible disaster management arrangements in place should a similar event happen again. To that end, I have tasked the Inspector-General Emergency Management with completing a review of the response and recovery to the bushfires and the monsoon trough. These reviews include input from the public and private sectors. I would now like to table the terms of reference for the flood review, which was announced on Thursday, 7 February.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, by the Inspector-General Emergency Management titled 'The 2019 Monsoon Trough Rainfall and Flood Review: Terms of Reference for a review of preparedness for a response to the monsoon trough rainfall and flooding event across Queensland' [145](#).

It also takes true, strong leadership to recognise that these events do not end once the rain stops or the blackened earth starts showing green shoots. It will take years for Queenslanders to recover. We know from experience that we will again face bushfires, cyclones and flooding rains. Ultimately, leadership is about building safe, caring and connected communities and that is what this Palaszczuk government does.