




Speech By
Hon. Craig Crawford

MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Carroll, Commissioner K

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (10.04 am): I rise to update the House on what is now ex-Tropical Cyclone Ann, which is off the coast of Queensland's Far North. This morning, a severe weather warning was issued from Cooktown down to Ingham, including Lizard Island. Residents and visitors in those areas can expect damaging winds of up to 90 kilometres per hour and showers increasing to heavy rain. Fortunately, there has been no damage so far.

QFES Commissioner Katarina Carroll has deployed swiftwater rescue personnel and drone operators to monitor the weather and join our amazing emergency services personnel up there who are already on the ground, because this Palaszczuk government is 100 per cent committed to ensuring that Queenslanders are safe. Tropical Cyclone Ann is a late season cyclone. In fact, she is coming very late to the party. The cyclone season officially finished on 30 April. Obviously, no-one told Mother Nature.

This brings me to a sad but necessary part of my role as Queensland's Fire and Emergency Services minister. These sittings are the last for our QFES Commissioner Katarina Carroll as she begins her transition to the Police Service. For the past 4½ years, Commissioner Carroll has steered a steady course at QFES's helm. Today, I have the task of saying goodbye.

Commissioner Carroll was not just our first female QFES commissioner but Queensland's first female commissioner full stop. Commissioner Carroll came to QFES from the ranks of the Police Service and immediately had to tackle a culture that was concerning, and she has done that. Last week, I was privileged to join her at the graduation ceremony of this year's first cohort of firefighter recruits, of whom almost 30 per cent are women. Now, Commissioner Carroll is returning to the Police Service as its first female commissioner.

As we know, integrity, intelligence, determination and vision are not gender issues. The commissioner has been cited many times as saying that her greatest inspirations were her people and serving the community. In QFES, that also means providing leadership in the most extreme of circumstances. Maybe Cyclone Ann is heading our way as Mother Nature's last hurrah under Katarina's watch.

One thing that has been somewhat overlooked in what has, quite frankly, been a brilliant career for the commissioner is her passion for education. I would like to put on the record that this passion has resulted in an impressive and enviable list of awards, merits and degrees—from an Associate Diploma in Community Welfare in 1982 to a Bachelor of Arts in Criminology and Criminal Justice and an Executive Masters of Public Administration. In 2018, Commissioner Carroll was the recipient of Griffith University's Outstanding Alumnus Award. Who are the main beneficiaries of this outstanding and accomplished dedication to education, leadership and self-improvement? The people of Queensland.

The Premier and I have seen Commissioner Carroll in action across the state—from the remote communities of Kowanyama, Pormpuraaw and Lockhart River to our east coast communities between Cairns, Townsville, Mackay and Rockhampton. At the end of last year I observed Commissioner Carroll lead QFES magnificently as Queenslanders confronted their worst bushfire season on record. While we were dealing with the fires, Severe Tropical Cyclone Owen crossed the coast near Cardwell. Then we had Penny. Then we had Oma. Then we had Trevor. At the helm consistent, calm and cool headed was Commissioner Katarina Carroll. Then we had a monsoon trough that dumped an unimaginable amount of rain on North and North-West Queensland. People in those communities, including in the Townsville region, are still recovering.

I have watched the commissioner inspire the men and women who make up her QFES team. I have watched as, with focus and compassion, Commissioner Carroll worked with communities facing down natural disasters. For that I say thank you. Queensland's Police Service is now truly blessed to have her and the men and women of QFES are better off for her having been with them.