




Speech By
Hon. Craig Crawford

MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Budget, Fire and Emergency Services

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (9.57 am): It is with no small measure of pride that I stand in this House today to talk about the second consecutive record budget for Queensland Fire and Emergency Services. This is a budget that comes in the wake of unprecedented bushfires, widespread and devastating floods, Townsville's monsoon trough and a series of cyclones that touched just about every community on the state's east coast. This year more than \$740 million has been allocated to QFES to employ more front-line firefighters, put more trucks on the ground and build and upgrade more fire and emergency services stations. That is almost \$24 million more than last year.

With this budget we are continuing to deliver brand-new career firefighters across Queensland, as we committed to at the election. With nearly 50 of the 100 promised recruits already allocated, another 25 will be allocated from this year's training courses because this is a government that backs jobs across this great state. In this budget we are also investing \$50 million in firefighting appliances. That equates to 75 front-line firefighting trucks ready, expertly equipped and waiting to keep Queenslanders safe. Some will be Rural Fire Service; some Fire and Emergency Services. Some will be yellow; some will be red. Some will be our newly arriving aerial firefighting fleet—the largest of our trucks and the flagship of our fleet.

We know that the Palaszczuk government governs for all of Queensland—from the islands of the Torres Strait to the edges of the Simpson Desert and across the glories of the Gold Coast—and that is why there is \$104 million in new capital works expenditure and capital grants for QFES in this budget. That is new stations, station upgrades and continued works in places like Charters Towers, Weipa, Rathdowney, Gracemere, Longreach, Rainbow Beach, Bracken Ridge, West Logan, El Arish, Esk, Yarraman, Kilkivan, Rosewood and Charlton near Toowoomba. This is a government that backs regional Queensland and the organisation that is found in every Queensland community, the State Emergency Service. The SES will receive almost \$5 million for communications, facilities, flood boats and vehicles. We know that when Queenslanders get into trouble it is the sea of orange that signals that the SES is on its way to help get them out.

Let us compare our record with the record of those opposite, particularly that of the Campbell Newman government and his protege, the now Leader of the Opposition. As I have mentioned already, under Labor we are seeing a growth in front-line firefighting staff. In the 2016-17 budget Labor committed \$3 million to our rural fire brigades for fuel and maintenance and that figure has continued to rise. Under the LNP, our brigades in the heartland of the areas represented by those opposite received nothing to put fuel in their tanks or to keep equipment and their trucks serviced and on the roads. They planned to slash around 60 of the Rural Fire Service employees—the bulk of those who were training our volunteer firefighters.

The Palaszczuk government is investing in our people, in our buildings, in our vehicles. That means restoring vital front-line firefighters. That means building stations where populations are growing. That means more front-line firefighting vehicles on the ground. This is a QFES budget that reinforces our commitment to keeping Queenslanders safe. I shudder to think where we would have been in November last year if we did not have these people in our ranks.