




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

Record of Proceedings, 13 February 2019

MOTION

Bushfire Prevention and Preparedness, Inquiry

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (5.48 pm): I rise with pleasure to support the motion moved by the member for Gregory. The ignorance of those opposite is evident when we hear their speeches. They misunderstand what the opposition is trying to do here by offering a solution to the Palaszczuk government when they are obviously in dire need of one.

What we are moving here tonight is for a parliamentary inquiry into what happened in relation to the bushfires. Why did it happen and how can we ever prevent it from happening again? Each and every one of us on this side of the chamber have thanked, and will continue to thank, our hardworking QFES workers, our rural fireys, our volunteers, our police officers, our ambulance officers and our park rangers because they worked within the confines of what was given to them by this Palaszczuk government.

When the Rural Fire Service says to the people of Queensland, 'The internal review by the Palaszczuk government simply will not cut it,' I know who I am going to listen to. I am going to listen to the hardworking men and women who protect our communities. For those opposite who have no clue what rural fireys do, they are volunteers. They are out there saving us each and every day on the front line. So when those good people say to me, 'An internal review into the disastrous fires—catastrophic fires—does not cut it,' I am going to listen to those men and women rather than the Palaszczuk government which has obviously missed the boat in relation to this.

There are serious concerns around staffing levels in our national parks. At a time when we see over 26,000 extra public servants, we have fewer police and national parks are screaming out for help. And guess why? Because the jobs are not in Ann Street. The jobs are where they should be: on the ground. That is the problem with this Palaszczuk government, and we need to get to the bottom of it. We need to hear from everyone. We need to have a parliamentary inquiry so people can come and sit in front of people and discuss what went wrong.

My heart and my thoughts go out to the Bird family for the tragic loss of their son George from Rolleston. People from regional Queensland have lived and worked on the land. When they know they need to get a permit and when they have been screaming out for a permit for 12 months, people need to listen to them and that, in this case, is the Palaszczuk government. We have a good neighbour policy in this country, and when the state government is our neighbour we expect them to be a good neighbour. If the state government is a national park and the other neighbour, the freehold landholder, is saying to their neighbour, 'Please tidy up your patch,' and 'Let us put in some fire breaks because the government will not give us a permit,' there is a problem.

What we need is a review into what has been going wrong in our national parks. It is not a simple fix of saying, 'Let's protect our rainforests.' It is embarrassing that those opposite in the Palaszczuk government—those who aspire to be ministers in this government—seriously use the word 'rainforests'

when we are talking about areas like Baffle Creek. That comes from being out of touch. Why has the Palaszczuk government not implemented any of the recommendations of the Auditor-General's review into the preparation of our communities for bushfire disasters? That is another question that we need answered, but it is only the LNP that appears to have a plan to protect the future of regional Queensland in this great state.