




Speech By
Julianne Gilbert

MEMBER FOR MACKAY

Record of Proceedings, 13 February 2019

MOTION

Bushfire Prevention and Preparedness, Inquiry

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (5.24 pm): It is a shame that the member for Callide had to start his speech with a put-down. I do not think those opposite have a positive bone in their bodies. They always come into this House looking for someone to blame and they do their blaming prematurely. There is no chance that any of them would ever wait for anything official or for an outcome such as we all need to have. Now is the time when we should wait for the advice of the experts, that is, those who know the science and who can give us advice with a level head. Instead of sensationalising everything for five-minute grabs, members opposite need to wait for the advice of the experts and then listen to it. We cannot let the facts be blurred by all of the negativity from those opposite. In direct contrast, the Palaszczuk government—

Mrs Frecklington: We're actually trying to help you out by offering a solution.

Mrs GILBERT: The Leader of the Opposition should listen. In contrast, the Palaszczuk government is a consultative government. We do not make decisions lightly. We like to talk to all of the stakeholders and experts, and we make informed decisions based on the facts. I have chosen to stand here today and speak in this debate because I know the information that we will get will be good, solid information.

Queensland's responsible vegetation management framework includes measures that ensure that landholders can protect their properties from bushfires, including through firebreaks and fire management lines. Those laws, on which there was significant consultation, are clear and easy to understand. A firebreak is a strip of cleared land that is intended to allow firefighting vehicles to access bushland and for prescribed burning operations. It may slow or stop low-intensity fires. A fire management line can be used to access water for firefighting, divide a property into subunits to allow fuel reduction burning programs to be carried out and/or to divide a property into subunits to allow for back-burning in the event of a wildfire.

No approval or notification is needed to clear necessary firebreaks or fire management lines. I will say that again: no approval or notification is needed to clear necessary firebreaks or fire management lines. Specifically, the landholder may clear to establish or maintain a firebreak to protect infrastructure, other than fences or roads, up to 1.5 times the height of the tallest adjacent vegetation or 20 metres, whichever is wider. It is clear that the opposition leader does not understand this, because she is asking for advice from people behind her. The landholder may clear a fire management line of 10 metres width and a clearing up to 10 metres wide to establish or maintain a fence, thus providing a fire management line on the boundary of the property. In non-coastal areas, a landholder can clear a firebreak up to 1.5 times the height of the tallest adjacent vegetation or 30 metres wide, whichever is the greater, provided that they make a notification to the DNRME. The notification is free. It can be done quickly and easily online.

In an emergency landholders can do any clearing required by an authorised officer. The bottom line is—and it is worth reiterating for those opposite with selective memories—that responsible measures have always been permitted. These regulatory exemptions under the vegetation management framework have not changed in 20 years. Should a landholder consider they need to clear a wider firebreak or management line than provided by the above measures, they are able to make an application for a development approval.

(Time expired)