



Speech By  
**Lachlan Millar**


**MEMBER FOR GREGORY**

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Record of Proceedings, 15 May 2019

## ADJOURNMENT

### Rural Fire Brigades

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (7.00 pm): I table a nonconforming petition of 832 signatories calling on the Labor government to abandon plans for a Brisbane takeover of our rural fire brigades and SES groups.

*Tabled paper:* Nonconforming petition regarding rural fire service and SES [\[775\]](#).

The petition was needed and called for following considerable outcry from our local rural fire brigades over the Labor government's plans to restructure how rural fire brigades and local SES groups report, operate and are managed within Queensland Fire and Emergency Services.

I am pleased to report that, due to pressure from the Rural Fire Brigades Association and many Queenslanders, the Labor government has made some concessions. By no means does it fix all issues. While Labor's Brisbane takeover and power grab of rural fire and SES continues, the department has made some considerable commitments—I also acknowledge the minister for listening to the rural fire brigades in regard to this—to now consult with the very volunteers who make up 80 per cent of QFES. This is a pleasant change, given the botched consultation process undertaken by the Labor government, which failed to engage with more than 42,000 volunteers within QFES. The LNP will continue to watch this space and hold the Labor government to account, as we should, on its commitments to formalise a better engagement and consultation process with rural fire brigades and local SES groups.

For the first time ever, rural fire brigade first officers will now have access to a simple, place based decision-making process to ensure that, when it comes to fighting fires, local knowledge and control will be respected and implemented. That is incredibly important. While this is a positive step in the right direction, the Rural Fire Brigades Association of Queensland would like to see further legislative changes to formalise a simple, workable command and control tactical directive that clearly defines responsibility for rural fire brigades, the State Emergency Service and Fire and Emergency Services.

As the party that represents rural and regional Queenslanders, the LNP understands and respects the role that local knowledge and expertise play when it comes to fighting bushfires. My father has been involved in rural fire brigades for a long time and I understand what is needed to be done. That is why we will continue to pressure this Labor government to implement these promises to Queensland rural fire brigades.

We all know that it is in Queensland Labor's DNA to govern from Brisbane for Brisbane. That is why, when it comes to issues affecting rural and regional Queenslanders, the LNP will always fight for our local fire brigades' autonomy. Our local rural fire brigades are important. The member for Scenic Rim, who is sitting beside me, knows more than ever how important they are. I visited his region recently. We need to make sure we protect them and ensure they have a say.

*(Time expired)*