



Speech By  
**Hon. Leanne Enoch**


**MEMBER FOR ALGESTER**

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Record of Proceedings, 13 February 2019

**MOTION**

**Bushfire Prevention and Preparedness, Inquiry**

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts) (5.54 pm): I rise to oppose the motion. Not long after it was made safe, I visited Carnarvon with about a dozen rangers who are based out there and with traditional owners. I saw firsthand the catastrophic situation that we had been dealt on those days of unprecedented weather. What we saw were unprecedented events.

When I was there the traditional owners were very clear about the next steps in terms of how we tell the story of what is going on there. Unfortunately, the member for Warrego has completely disrespected and disregarded their wishes with her comments tonight. I feel disgusted by what she has done. The traditional owners made it very clear what steps should be next, and she has completely disrespected that. Why has the member for Warrego done that? Because she is after cheap political shots, using a situation where traditional owners have been very clear. The member for Warrego has absolutely disregarded that and it is absolutely disgusting. As a traditional owner myself, I find it absolutely disgusting.

When I met with the rangers at Carnarvon, they were absolutely exhausted. They were emotionally exhausted, they were physically exhausted and they were spiritually exhausted from what they had been dealing with during these unprecedented events. They are based there. They had been working tirelessly to ensure they were prepared for fire season and they had been dealt with an absolutely unprecedented set of events. Every day our QPWS staff work really hard on national parks, and I find it so insulting and disgusting to hear the kinds of comments coming from the opposition about our incredibly hardworking staff.

The member for Gregory made comments about where the majority of fires started during these unprecedented events. I am advised—and I can now pass on this advice to the House—that in 2018 less than 10 per cent of bushfires in Queensland started on QPWS managed estate and 70 per cent of that 10 per cent was contained within that estate. It is completely untrue to say that the majority of fires started on the protected area estate. It is completely untrue.

In relation to our protected areas, when those opposite were in government they showed us how they really feel about protected areas and the staff who manage them, and we are seeing it on display again tonight. The former LNP government slashed around \$10 million from the QPWS salary budget after they were elected in 2012. What that meant is that QPWS had 60 fewer rangers as a result of their \$10 million cut to the salary budget. The non-ranger workforce, who support the work of front-line staff, was reduced by 25 per cent. The LNP slashed funding to things they did not care about, and unfortunately QPWS felt the brunt of that.

Our government has been rebuilding the capacity of QPWS following the irresponsible and disastrous cuts by the LNP. QPWS's budget for fire management in 2017-18 was almost \$10 million. They now have a trained fire crew of 537 staff members across the state. They put their heart and soul

into protecting our estate and they physically put their bodies on the line when they were fighting fires during this unprecedented event. I find this absolutely disgusting, and we will be opposing this motion this evening.

*(Time expired)*