




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

Record of Proceedings, 18 September 2019

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Bushfires, Small Business

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (10.06 am): As fires continue to burn and smoulder in parts of Queensland, we want to assure impacted small business owners that they are not alone. Small businesses impacted by the unprecedented bushfires in the Southern Downs Regional Council and Scenic Rim council areas will be provided with disaster assistance under the Commonwealth-state Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. This assistance includes concessional loans of up to \$250,000 for those who suffered direct damage and concessional loans of up to \$100,000 for those who did not suffer direct damage but suffered loss of income as a direct result of the bushfires. Small businesses are the lifeblood of our communities and, with this assistance, along with support offered by my department, we hope that impacted businesses will be able to get back on their feet as soon as possible.

I encourage everyone to do their bit in helping their local small business. Especially after a prolonged drought, I urge all Queenslanders to support regional small businesses by buying and going local. In their generosity, Queenslanders can support local small businesses by giving donations online to Givit. Cash donations to Givit allow produce and products to be sourced locally through local small businesses, ensuring that the money gets spent where it is needed the most.

Of course, recovery can be quite difficult, especially if people are dealing with the emotional impact of the disaster as well. We have 153 Mentoring for Growth mentors who have experience in disaster recovery already putting up their hands to help affected local business owners. We are working with local chambers of commerce and councils to make sure that this assistance gets to everyone who needs it, such as businesses like Binna Burra Lodge. Already, our Regional Skills Investment Strategy coordinator is engaged with Binna Burra Lodge to assist staff to find ongoing employment while they rebuild. My department is also working with the Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning regarding the Binna Burra Lodge task force and is involved in supporting the workers impacted by these fires.

Queenslanders look out for one another when times are tough and our small business community is no different. We will continue to work with the Queensland business community to provide support to get them back on their feet as soon as possible.