




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MIRANI

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ADJOURNMENT

Bushfires

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (7.18 pm): I rise to speak about the recent conflagration of bushfires that passed through the Mount Archer area in Rockhampton. We have recently been told by the federal member from the Greens that it was all due to climate change. I spoke to the police minister today, and there have been over 30 charges laid for people lighting these fires. That is an absolute shame because we almost lost some people at Alton Downs. There were some 'Red, red, red' calls, and it was a very close call for our people.

I am very concerned but there were some good things that came out of it. I was there on Thursday night after the fire to go through it with Mr Steve Barber. We spoke about how we could make things better because the way the fires unfolded presented a new challenge. Some of the people were moved from urbans back to rurals and vice versa. I am hoping that going forward there is a cross-contamination of training between the urbans and the rurals so they understand each other's equipment and they can work between the two. In that way, time would not be lost and fires could be adequately looked after and put out as quickly as possible. This would be especially so in a situation where people are lighting fires and we have our people out there trying to work. We do not know the cause yet, and it is a matter before the courts that I will not go into.

Situations can arise from these things that make it more dangerous for our frontline workers. I would like to thank all of the people from Alton Downs, including Owen Buckle and all of the people who work there. I would also like to thank the Queensland Police Service and the Ambulance Service because they were all there on the scene making the whole thing run very smoothly.

I would like to raise some issues that are ongoing with both Mount Morgan and Alton Downs. They are both really active within the rural firefighting community. A lot of fires have been lit by firebugs and they have been constantly pushing these people out into the districts for a long time. They have no toilets. There are no amenities for the women to go to the toilet. At night-time when they come home, they have to walk over 500 metres just to access any amenities, and I think that is wrong. We need to do something about that as soon as possible. These good people are putting their time and their lives on the line and the least the House can do is give them some way to go forward.

I would also like to raise the issue of the Finch Hatton airstrip. The federal government has put money in there but we have put nothing in. We need to put some water reserves in there for people and shore that place up. That took us to another area not long ago in the last lot of fires. I hope we can work together to make sure we deliver for these people.