



Speech By  
**Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe**


**MEMBER FOR SANDGATE**

---

Record of Proceedings, 18 September 2019

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Bushfires, Local Government**

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (9.57 am): Last week I had the opportunity to speak at the Local Government Managers Australia Queensland conference in Townsville. In that room there were due to be representatives from a large number of Queensland's councils. Unfortunately, some could not attend. They had to stay closer to home—home to fight the bushfires that led to a devastating loss of property but fortunately, as we all know, not a loss of life.

Across the state in the past week or so dozens of fires of varying severity have affected our communities and councils, and our local government authorities from the Gold Coast to the tip of Cape York are an integral part of our firefighting arsenal. The mayors, the councillors, their families and friends are in many cases the firefighters and the people supporting those men and women fighting the fires. Most, if not all, of our local government authorities are employers of auxiliary or volunteer firefighters and I thank them for allowing those people to defend those communities.

Of course, our councils play an integral role in the disaster management of their communities through the convening of their local disaster management groups. I want to acknowledge the great work that has happened right throughout the state in recent times in those particular roles. Last week I saw just how important these groups are when I visited Stanthorpe and Applethorpe and met with the Mayor of the Southern Downs Regional Council, Tracy Dobie. Mayor Dobie and her CEO, David Keenan, were—and still are—dealing with the aftermath of the unprecedented fires that swept through that region a couple of weekends ago. It was sobering to see just how close the fire came to the town and see the remnants of the four homes that had been destroyed.

On the ground, one thing that quickly became obvious was that Stanthorpe was saved because of the strong partnership between the council, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and the Southern Downs community. Firefighters—volunteers and staff—worked side by side as the fire swept down the hill and engulfed the homes of their neighbours. They held their ground as properties burned in a bid to stop more damage.

We did not see that just on the Granite Belt. Our local government authorities will be integral to the recovery efforts of their communities and, as we have seen already—which the Premier made reference to yesterday—the Palaszczuk government will be there with them every step of the way.