



Speech By  
**Ann Leahy**


**MEMBER FOR WARREGO**

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**LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE**

**Report, Motion to Take Note**

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (3.27 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the *Examination of Queensland Audit Office report 5: 2018-19: Follow-up of bushfire prevention and preparedness* from the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. Firstly, let me place on the record my sincere sympathies to those families and friends who have lost loved ones in bushfires throughout Australia. There were also lives lost in last year's fires close to my electorate. I also wish to thank our rural service volunteers who have diligently and often put their lives on the line to fight these bushfires to protect property and communities. We are deeply indebted to these volunteers who not only volunteer in their own communities but often go and lend a hand interstate.

I note the report is a follow-up report on the original audit done in 2014 that concluded that Queensland was not as prepared for the threat of bushfires as it could be. This report is a damning assessment of the Labor government's management of bushfire risk. The audit found that QFES was 'response-focused' to the 'detriment of coordinating effective mitigation programs'. The Queensland Audit Office also found that QFES was unable to efficiently target its educational activities and as a result was unaware if community members were prepared for bushfires.

In March 2018 the Queensland Audit Office set out to establish whether QFES had effectively implemented the recommendations made by the Queensland Audit Office in the 2014 Auditor-General's report. The Queensland Audit Office found that QFES has made some progress but it has only partially implemented the recommendations. Lack of implementation is a consistent theme across states where we have had bushfires. If there is no fuel there is no fire; it is as simple as that.

There are suggestions of some 57 formal public inquiries, reviews and royal commissions relating to bushfires and fire management since 1939. That is about one inquiry every two years in the past 80 years. There is no shortage of reviews and recommendations about bushfires. The problem is the failure of Labor governments, which pander to a green environmental agenda, to implement these recommendations—governments like Anastacia Palaszczuk's Labor government, which relies on Greens preferences. It has only completed 54 per cent of the planned burns to be carried out in the past four years. During that same period, 2016 to 2019, Queensland has seen a 40 per cent decrease in the number of firebreaks being built—the problem again is with implementation—as well as a 45 per cent reduction in bushfire community education activities—again a problem with implementation. The report also shows that QFES has only issued 12 notices to landholders to reduce fuel loads on properties and in state controlled land on national parks—again a problem with implementation. It is time for the Labor government to explain to Queenslanders why there is this lack of implementation.

What we need is the LNP's 10-point plan to get Queensland bushfire ready. The LNP's 10-point plan is a culmination of recommendations, and many of those focus on implementation. The emphasis is on implementation, which is something that has been lacking while Labor has been in government. No more reports; no more reviews. We need actions like those outlined in the LNP's plan, including: a

one-stop shop for a streamlined approval process; deemed approval after 15 days under a right-to-burn model; new KPIs to achieve 98 per cent of hazard reduction activities—again it is about implementation—Indigenous rangers to undertake traditional burning; establishment of a natural disaster cabinet committee to monitor preparations; and monitored grazing in state forests and some national parks to manage fuel loads. They also need to: establish urban based fire volunteer brigades; restore local control to rural fire brigades; establish a rural fire board; and review aerial firefighting capability.

It is all about implementation, which the audit report tells us has not been happening. The 10-point plan shows that an LNP Frecklington government would be committed to decisive action and the implementation of recommendations to get Queensland bushfire ready. We have not seen that. As we have seen in these audit reports, that is not happening. We desperately need that 10-point plan.