



Speech By  
**Corrine McMillan**


**MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD**

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**LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE**

**Report, Motion to Take Note**

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (3.18 pm): The Queensland Audit Office forms a key part of the Palaszczuk government's integrity and accountability agenda. Report No. 49 of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee captures the Queensland Audit Office's report titled *Follow-up of bushfire prevention and preparedness*. The report reflects the dutiful work of the Queensland Audit Office. The committee requested a private meeting with Ms Daniele Bird, the Acting Auditor-General, and Mr David Toma, Director of Performance Audit, from the QAO on 1 April 2019 to discuss the QAO report in detail. Further, on 29 April 2019 the committee wrote to the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services seeking an update on the progress of the implementation of the recommendations in the QAO report.

The response received from QFES referenced the following progress amongst other strategies. QFES's ability to respond to bushfires has progressed well beyond the original QAO recommendations. Five years ago when the QAO made their recommendations even the Wishart Fire and Rescue Station in my electorate looked very different. There was a vacant dirt block where the Wishart Fire and Rescue Station training facility stands today. QFES maintains a commitment to keeping communities safe through the ongoing implementation of evidence based evaluation of events including the effectiveness of actions applied from the QAO report and the IGEM bushfire review.

A number of the initial QAO recommendations have not kept pace with best practice—an example being QFES's use of emergency alerts straight to mobile phones and landlines to provide live information. During the recent Peregrine fires, EAs achieved a 90 per cent connection. EAs, as we would all note, were not recommended by the QAO in that initial report.

QFES maintains its commitment to the EA system and continues to expand its use of EAs during bushfires, with 25 emergency alerts issued during the events of September 2019. Figures for EAs later in the year from 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2019 was 58. QFES has exceeded the QAO report in predictive intelligence and fire behaviour modelling tools. QFES fire behaviour analysts use cutting-edge and critical decision-making tools during fire events like that of the Peregrine fire in September 2019. These predictive intelligence products were critical in the development of over 800 bushfire community warnings issued during the September 2019 bushfires and more than 1,400 were issued in the November-December 2019 fires to ensure that our communities were empowered through timely advice.

There was also increased engagement with local government disaster management coordinators, particularly to explain area fire management group structures and a partnership approach to connect bushfire mitigation planning with broader disaster management planning through the local disaster management group. The rollout of predictive tools to over 6,800 users, including our Rural Fire Service volunteers and our external partners, expanded the use of predictive modelling for risk identification in Operation Cool Burn 2019.

As the commissioner has stated, 'Bushfire management is a dynamic and fast-evolving area where new technologies emerge quickly. QFES remains committed to implementing the intent of recommendations of the Auditor-General's report to ensure that Queensland's communities are as prepared and protected from the impacts of bushfires as possible.' I commend this report to the House.