



Speech By  
**Hon. Craig Crawford**


**MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER**

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## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Inspector-General Emergency Management, Review; Bushfires, Aerial Resources**

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (9.46 am): The Inspector-General Emergency Management has now handed down its review into last year's bushfires at Stanthorpe, Sarabah and Peregian Springs. As the Premier said, the review found strong and continuous enhancement in the state's bushfire preparation, mitigation and overall firefighting response. We pride ourselves on a culture of continuous improvement in Queensland to ensure our disaster management arrangements remain world-class.

IGEM identified preseason preparedness, hazard reduction burns and water-bombing techniques as highlights of the Queensland bushfire campaign—measures that undeniably saved homes and businesses. Community surveys found high levels of household preparedness, with two-thirds of survey respondents in the bushfire areas confirming they had partially or fully prepared a household emergency plan, an emergency kit, an evacuation plan and an evacuation kit.

The Premier mentioned a particular case study praised by IGEM, and that is the State Emergency Service aircraft handling. The purchase of a hangar at the Toowoomba City Aerodrome has provided the QFES State Air Operations Unit with a hub for training and innovation support. This has allowed QFES to train some of its SES personnel to replenish water and foam in water-bombing aircraft—a practice successfully implemented at both Toowoomba and Stanthorpe during the September fires. It is something I know our orange army is incredibly proud of and something that QFES is committed to grow into future campaigns.

I would like to once more place on record my deep admiration and appreciation for our emergency services and those communities who endured the unprecedented and extraordinary bushfire season last year. As the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services, it is my job to ensure Queensland has the necessary capability to effectively prevent and respond to the threat of bushfires in Queensland. That is why, as the Premier has announced this morning, the Palaszczuk government has committed more than \$15 million to secure a large air tanker for Queensland. Firefighting aircraft have become an integral part of our bushfire response. This commitment guarantees that, for the next five fire seasons, Queensland has its own large-scale water bomber. With both Queensland and New South Wales enduring unprecedented bushfires at the same time, it is no longer feasible for us to share this resource.

There were instances last year when the LAT was heading to Queensland from New South Wales and had to be redirected back for more urgent business. The Prime Minister refused to support a Queensland based large air tanker. The Premier said we would go it alone, and that is exactly what we have done. I thank the Premier for her drive, her commitment and her support to QFES for this project. Our firefighters are world class, and it is only fitting that their resources are too. For the next five years QFES crews can look to the sky as we add a significant and strategic overhead resource crewed by arguably some of the bravest pilots and crews on the planet.