



Speech By  
**David Crisafulli**

**MEMBER FOR BROADWATER**

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Record of Proceedings, 21 May 2020

**LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE**

**Report, Motion to Take Note**

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (3.08 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Queensland Audit Office report *Follow-up of bushfire prevention and preparedness*. Like the minister, I share her respect for our rangers, for our dedicated firefighters and for our First Australians who play a great role in bushfire management and preparedness. However, unlike the minister, I intend to look at the report and find ways that we can improve what we do in this state. There is no point in us coming in here and being a cheerleader. People elect us to be leaders, not to be cheerleaders, and where there are improvements to be made we must make them and this report highlights areas where improvements can be made. I note that the Audit Office raised several things, including—

QFES has not fully rolled out its new risk mitigation ... tools across all regions ... more training and continuous improvement is needed to make sure they are effectively used to strengthen Queensland's approach to risk mitigation.

The report went on—

Better engagement with local communities is also needed to understand their risks and help them prepare for bushfires.

This report highlights that in recent times, under this government, there has been a dramatic drop in hazard reduction burns and firebreaks. There has not been enough bushfire preventative maintenance. There is no point standing up in this place and simply acknowledging the hard work of those people on the front line. We all know the hard work of the people on the front line. In many cases they are fighting on the front line with one arm tied behind their back because the maintenance is not done, the resources are not there and services have been cut back. The government, led by Annastacia Palaszczuk, has only completed 54 per cent of planned burns—

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Pugh): Proper titles, member for Broadwater.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Under the leadership of the Premier, only 54 per cent of planned burns have been completed. During the same period Queensland has seen a 40 per cent decrease in the number of firebreaks being built as well as a 45 per cent reduction in bushfire community education activity. Compare that with the 10-point bushfire mitigation plan outlined by the shadow minister and the member for Nanango. That plan provides a one-stop shop for streamlined approval processes—tick; a deemed approval after 15 business days under a right to burn so that things cannot sit in abeyance forever. Paralysis via analysis has to stop. It further provides for new KPIs to achieve 98 per cent of hazard reduction activities; Indigenous rangers to undertake traditional burning. The minister touched on this. Of course we need to be doing more with our First Australians who have been doing this for generations. The plan provides for the establishment of a natural disaster cabinet committee to monitor preparation—who can argue with that? It provides for monitored grazing in state forests and some national parks to manage fuel loads; establish urban based rural fire volunteer brigades; restore local control to rural fire brigades. Heaven forbid, local control to rural fire brigades!

The report clearly shows there is more that can be done. The report highlights that in the five years since we have previously looked at this there have been some steps forward. I want to echo what the minister said when she quite rightly praised those on the front line. To fail to acknowledge the need to do better, to fail to acknowledge the need to properly resource the people who are doing this work, both in prevention and at the front line when disaster occurs, would be a failing of this parliament. It is not being critical of those on the front line. It is essential to fight for what they need. They do not have a voice. They rely on us. That is why the committee process in this state works the way it does. A unicameral parliament must have a strong committee process otherwise the checks and balances are not in place. The report we are discussing today raises some excellent points for taking steps forward and we cannot wait another half a decade to implement these recommendations.