




Speech By
Lachlan Millar

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

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LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (3.37 pm): It is disappointing that Labor will probably never fully implement these recommendations. It is disappointing that Labor continues to not follow what rural fireys and local people with local knowledge have been saying for a long time. If you want to control bushfires, look to the knowledge of the locals, believe in your first officers and make sure you do prevention first by lowering the fuel loads. Ever since the Labor Party came to power we have seen major changes in the way they deal with fuel loads in national parks and state forests. Gone are grazing leases in state forests and the opportunity to use our cattle industry to reduce our fuel loads.

Why would the Labor Party want to cause a problem such that over the past 12 months or so they have to now rely on the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services and our hardworking Queensland Fire and Emergency Services personnel, rural fireys, SES, police officers and first responders? We all remember what happened in Gracemere and around Bundaberg in November last year, and of course it repeated itself this year. We saw massive fires in areas around Millmerran, which I visited, and in the member for Condamine's seat. The frustration on those people's faces was amazing. They are hardworking volunteers who want to do everything they can for their local community, and the first thing is to protect it. How can they protect their local community when the state Labor government of the day is possibly the worst neighbour you could ever have when it comes to bushfires?

I have seen the frustration on some of these graziers around Bundaberg, and I am talking about David Marland. We saw what happened to his leasehold property in the Bundaberg region. It was totally burnt out. The Labor Party love to say that they are the wildlife warriors when it comes to protecting our wildlife. There is nothing more eerie than going into a totally burnt out area, such as I saw around the member for Burnett's area at Baffle Creek, and experiencing the silence. Not a bird could be heard. There were no animals. They were all scorched. It is such a tragic thing.

We have seen an implementation regime from the Labor Party that has caused devastation for those areas around Eungella and Bundaberg. It will take over 20 or 30 years for that country to be repaired in some way, yet the Labor Party tell us that they are for the environment. Creating an absolute perfect scenario when it comes to bushfires, with high fuel loads in national parks—

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr MILLAR: I take that interjection from the member opposite. How about you come with me? I will take you on a trip—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McArdle): Stop the clock. Member for Gregory, you know very clearly that you cannot use the word 'you'. All comments must come through the chair.

Mr MILLAR: Through you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I would love to take any of those members opposite for a trip to some of these areas that have been hit hard. They would see the frustration and the concern on the faces of locals when it comes to these bushfires.

Once again, the LNP is left to ask the unanswered questions. Why has the Labor government only completed 54 per cent of planned burns over the past four years? The answer is important. If it is truly due to a shorter cool burn window, that is not a free pass. If we have shorter cool burn periods—

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Stop the clock. Let us get the House back to order.

Mr MILLAR: Of course after the Labor government's unscientific vegetation management laws and its threatened plant species laws, we are unable to use mechanical slashing, vegetation clearing and firebreak constructions the way we used to. Introducing legislation such as the vegetation management laws has had a dramatic effect on our ability to be prepared for the bushfire season. There is no doubt about it. Taking away the opportunity to do grazing in state forests has taken away the opportunity of being able to reduce those fuel loads in state forests and national parks. The only way we are going to get this right is hopefully on 31 October when we elect an LNP government and get it done right.