




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACALISTER

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LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (3.09 pm): I rise to speak to the House about the Queensland Audit Office's report No. 5 titled *Follow-up of bushfire prevention and preparedness*. The Queensland Audit Office's report is a follow-up from the 2014-15 report and was tabled in the House on 9 October 2018. It was referred to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. In examining the Audit Office report, the committee met with the Acting Auditor-General in April 2019 and tabled its report in September 2019.

The 2018 audit came to the following conclusions. Firstly, that the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services had made efforts to address underlying issues that the Queensland Audit Office identified in its original 2014 audit. Secondly, that there had been increased focus on bushfire risk mitigation activities statewide and had also improved its engagement with key stakeholders. Finally, that QFES is now able to better coordinate and manage Queensland's bushfire risk.

The Queensland Audit Office did find that there was more work still to be done to ensure that Queensland communities are not exposed to higher levels of risk than necessary and that while some of the original 2014-15 recommendations had not been completed QFES is reliant upon the actions of others to fully implement recommendations. Since the QAO's recommendations were tabled in October 2018, QFES has provided the Audit Office with details of the ongoing work that had continued since the audit and further provided information to the committee in a report dated June 2019.

Acting Commissioner Mike Wassing summarised some of the areas where work had continued on into 2019. These included, but were not limited to, the rollout of predictive tools to over 6,800 users, including Rural Fire Service volunteers. For the information of members, while bushfire prone area mapping within the redi-portal is utilised for land use and mitigation planning, predictive tools such as Phoenix and Sabre, which model fire behaviour, better support the simulation and analysis of fire behaviour with active fires. The Inspector-General Emergency Management noted that the use of Sabre and Phoenix is a capability that is cutting edge, used by others and worth building on.

These tools, combined with the skills of fire behaviour analysts, provide QFES with valuable decision support products and intelligence. QFES continues to build its intelligence capabilities through ongoing training and development of fire behaviour analysts and the further adaption of Sabre and Phoenix outputs for bushfire risk mitigation. QFES has rolled out Sabre access to many stakeholders. There are currently over 6,800 users who have access to this predictive modelling capability.

I am extremely well aware of the importance of relying on the best intelligence products possible and highly trained analysts to respond to unfolding and developing operational and tactical issues. Firefighting is clearly no different. QFES's predictive intelligence products were critical in the development of over 800 bushfire community warnings issued during September 2019. More recently, more than 1,400 were issued during the November-December 2019 fires. My community was on the

receiving end of these bushfire warnings at the end of last year as not only semirural parts of my electorate faced bushfires sweeping through backyards but also reserves located on the edge of our central business district did too.

In the more recent 2018 Queensland bushfire review report No.2 conducted by the Inspector-General for Emergency Management, special mention was made of the use of these intelligence products. Specifically, the IGEM comment that informed decision-making supported by intelligence was instrumental in preventing loss of life. I commend QFES for the increased adoption of intelligence and evidence based decision-making. It will continue to ensure that valuable bushfire-fighting resources are deployed when and where they are needed most. I commend the report to the House.