



Speech By  
**Barry O'Rourke**


**MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON**

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Record of Proceedings, 27 May 2021

**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Rockhampton, Bureau of Meteorology Station**

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (2.28 pm): In Rockhampton the federal LNP government is shutting down our Bureau of Meteorology office. I cannot believe that Michelle Landry, the member for Capricornia, has publicly spread a number of blatant falsehoods in an attempt to sell the closure of our local BOM office. The member for Capricornia posted a statement on her Facebook page in which she claimed to be correcting mistruths about the BOM office closure. Unfortunately, she then resorted to putting forward a number of statements that were blatantly false. There were two glaring falsehoods.

There has never been a weather radar in Rockhampton so to say it is being decommissioned is nonsense. Rockhampton has always been covered by weather radars located in Gladstone, Emerald and Mackay. The second falsehood was that the Rockhampton forecast has been coming from Brisbane since the seventies. Both of those statements are incorrect. The Rockhampton office had a radar up until only a few years ago and it employed forecasters who dealt with aviation, marine and public weather forecasts locally until 2012.

I find it incredible, and it is disappointing to see, that history is being rewritten as part of an effort to sell the BOM closure. Either the member for Capricornia has not bothered to understand the situation on the local history or she has deliberately misled our community. Many of our long-term residents know the truth.

The BOM's plan is to service Central Queensland out of Cairns, 1,000 kilometres away. That does not make any sense. There is not even a direct flight between these two areas, so when a local radar breaks down a technician will either need to fly from Cairns to Brisbane and then Brisbane to Rocky, or take the Qantas milk run, stopping along the way at Townsville and Mackay. That is not efficient and will just lead to greater delays.

The problems with the centralisation of services into Cairns were already showing in places like Mackay and Townsville, which had already lost their local offices. Recently, the Mackay radar had been out for more than four days due to equipment problems, and the Gladstone radar was also down for a few days during that time due to maintenance. Can you imagine if that happened when we had a cyclone heading our way?

I call on the BOM to reverse its decision. Michelle Landry should be backing our communities, not Canberra. We want to keep these services and personnel in Central Queensland. If anything, the BOM should be looking to grow its local presence rather than shutting it down.