




Speech By
Brittany Lauga

MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

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ADJOURNMENT

Keppel Electorate, Rural Fire Service Volunteers

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (9.47 pm): A big thankyou to the more than 30,000 rural fire brigade volunteers in Queensland. On Yellow Ribbon Day we say thank you to rural fire brigade volunteers who often leave their own homes to protect and defend others. I am a proud volunteer rural firefighter at The Caves Rural Fire Brigade and I cannot wait to get out on my first hazard reduction burn or emergency response. I have my ID card, my blue card and my uniform and PPE, and I am really keen for first officer Brad Kingston to show me the ropes.

It takes a lot of dedication to put the needs of your community first, yet that is what our RFS volunteers do time and time again. RFS volunteers help during emergencies but are also there to help with hazard reduction and mitigation burns. There are many different roles within the RFS and every one of them is vital for keeping our community safe. Whether volunteers are at the fireground, behind a barbeque, talking to the public, running a training exercise or holding a drip torch, everyone pitches in to do what needs to be done.

The 2021 bushfire season officially began in August and, thanks to the RFS, Keppel is well prepared. Bushfire mitigation plans have been finalised across Queensland, and QFES and our partners have completed hundreds of mitigation activities. Across the state brigades have also been working with traditional owners to explore the use of Indigenous burning methods, including Queensland's first planned burn conducted by an all-women team which took place on Minjerribah last year. Embracing cultural burning will allow us to better prepare for bushfires in the future. Thank you to all of the RFS volunteers for your commitment and your service to the community.

Congratulations also to Gracemere State School on its 150th birthday. I thank principal Samantha Howard and the entire school community for inviting me to celebrate with it last week. I was pleased to present the school with a new clock to mark such a momentous occasion. Thanks to Tony Newman for his stellar job emceeing, former principal Greg Wilkes for sharing his lovely memories at the school, assistant regional director Trudy Graham for a fitting tribute and all of the 150th celebrations organising committee for their work pulling together a wonderful event. Here is to another amazing 150 years. As its motto says, 'Our best—always'.

Last week we officially opened the brand new, fully covered, multipurpose sports court at the Carinity school at Glenlee. I am proud that the Palaszczuk government supported this project with \$505,000. Carinity contributed over \$400,000. It includes some grandstand seating and can adapt for basketball, volleyball, netball, handball and badminton. The court looks great and is clearly a popular addition to the school's infrastructure. It was also amazing to hear former NBL basketballer Eric Bailey give an inspirational speech to the students about dreaming big. We know that providing the best facilities and the best education possible is one way to help students achieve that, and I am really pleased that this new court will provide a great service to the students at Carinity.