




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

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ADJOURNMENT

Rockhampton, Bureau of Meteorology Station

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (7.04 pm): In April this year I rose in this place to voice my concerns about the closure of the Rockhampton Bureau of Meteorology station by the LNP Morrison government and the sacking of expert forecasters and technicians. I was very concerned about the potential devastating impact on regional weather radars, warning and disaster services. Since that time, I can confirm that staff have been sacked, all of the equipment at the station has been removed and the Bureau of Meteorology in Rockhampton has been closed. It is absolutely outrageous and I am completely aghast at this shocking decision of the LNP federal government.

Just last week, a Central Queensland meteorologist contacted me because they fear that someone could be killed by inaccurate and late forecasts and storm warnings due to the closure of the Bureau of Meteorology station in Rockhampton. Meteorologist Mike Griffin told me that inaccurate and untimely forecasts could adversely affect flight services, farmers and travellers with potentially fatal consequences. The recent misjudgement by the Brisbane BOM, which last week failed to predict a range of Central Queensland storms, proves the need to keep Rockhampton's BOM office. Closure of the Rockhampton BOM station by the LNP Morrison government and the sacking of expert forecasters and technicians has shown to have a devastating impact on regional weather, radar, warning and disaster services.

Last week's wild Central Queensland weather was missed by the Brisbane based BOM officers, with potentially devastating consequences to locals. Mr Griffin told me that Central Queensland needs to 'get a sonde or we're flying blind'. The LNP Morrison government has left Central Queensland flying blind when it comes to weather forecasting. The bottom line is that, now that they have closed the Rockhampton BOM office, we are getting second-rate forecasts. This could end up in a plane crash or a major storm event being missed without the sonde.

I call on federal MP Michelle Landry and Nationals Senator Matt Canavan to stop cutting local jobs and services and to reverse their government's cull of the Rockhampton BOM station. These cuts that they support are downright insulting to Central Queenslanders, and I call on them to reverse these devastating cuts to BOM jobs and services immediately. We need expert people monitoring the Rockhampton BOM—not an automated service that comes out of Brisbane. These Brisbane people cannot even pronounce the names of our suburbs properly! They have no idea about the local weather conditions because they are reading from a computer screen in Brisbane. We are moving into the annual storm and cyclone season. Late warnings will not be acceptable.

Given that our region is one of the most disaster affected areas in the country, our community and economy rely on reliable weather forecasts, observations and warnings. That is why a fully resourced BOM in our region is absolutely imperative. Our region deserves a fully resourced BOM station, but all this LNP government is doing is cutting jobs and services.