




Speech By
Hon. Mark Ryan

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

K'gari, Bushfires

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (10.01 am): The bushfires on K'gari last year posed a particular challenge for emergency responders and partner agencies given the nature of the terrain and that that illegally lit fire was on an island, in fact, the world's largest sand island, with important links to thousands of years of culture and tradition for the Butchulla people. The fire impacted nearly 85,000 hectares, which is just over half of the island. Around 30 different water-bombing aircraft dropped more than 13 million litres of water on the fire. Thankfully, there was no loss of life and while there was no significant structural damage there was an impact to the World Heritage listed island's natural habitat.

As with all events of this kind, there was also an impact on the local and broader communities. This government recognises the disruption to the local community, the Butchulla people and the tourists and holiday-makers who visited the island. Firefighters, volunteers, government personnel, traditional owners and the local community worked together to battle the blaze that continued to burn for a number of weeks. I commend them all on their efforts and thank them for their dedication to service and professionalism.

It is important that following any major emergency event like that bushfire we evaluate the response. That is why it was appropriate for the Inspector-General Emergency Management, Alistair Dawson, to examine all of the circumstances surrounding the bushfire. Accordingly, I now table the *K'gari (Fraser Island) bushfire review: Report 1: 2020-21* and the Queensland government's response to the review report.

Tabled paper: Inspector-General Emergency Management: K'gari (Fraser Island) Bushfire Review: Report 1: 2020-21 [723](#).

Tabled paper: Inspector-General Emergency Management: K'gari (Fraser Island) Bushfire Review: Report 1: 2020-21, government response [724](#).

The report highlights areas of good practice and also proposes lessons that can be learned and applied from the IGEM's expert findings. It is only by constantly analysing and evaluating major emergency incidents that we are able to continue to enhance the already formidable capacity of our combined government agencies' responses. In his report the Inspector General Emergency Management noted that there was no loss of human life and no homes lost. He went on to say—

This is despite unique challenges including widespread mobile phone and internet blackspots, dry and fire receptive vegetation, inaccessible terrain, and narrow sand tracks.

The IGEM acknowledges the commitment and fortitude of fire management and response agencies, rural fire brigades, the Butchulla people and community associations on the island in responding to this highly complex and challenging bushfire event that tested response agencies.

This government has carefully considered the IGEM's report and supports or supports in principle all of the IGEM's recommendations. I commend the IGEM and his office for this body of work. I also commend the Butchulla people, the local community and other key stakeholders who gave generously of their time to contribute to this report.