




Speech By
Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Disaster Preparedness

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (2.50 pm): Just two days ago in this chamber, the Premier spoke about the Bureau of Meteorology's forecast for natural disasters. As someone whose roles prior to politics dealt with natural disasters regularly, I want to remind Queenslanders that preparation is vital. However, it is one of the Premier's remarks that reinforces the disconnect within this current government. She stated—

The clear message is that from flooding and cyclones to bushfires, heatwaves and giant hail, we experience it all in Queensland and now is the time to prepare.

Those were the Premier's words and Queenslanders know that when they are facing those types of incidents—and in the recovery—we turn to emergency responders, both paid and volunteers. Just as Queenslanders should be, those agencies will be preparing for the upcoming season. However, even before the storms start to gather, they do so under a dark cloud.

As Peter Gleeson reported in the *Courier-Mail* on 8 September, rumours are circulating that mass changes are on the horizon for our emergency services, especially our volunteer emergency services. It is time for this government to come clean. For over 2½ years this government has kept the Darby review into the SES a secret, and for over 12 months now the KPMG review into the structure of QFES has also been kept secret—secret from the taxpayers who bore the cost of both and, even more heartlessly, the volunteers who will be directly affected.

The bushfire royal commission, the IGEM report into the K'gari bushfires and, just this week, the IGEM report into our most recent disaster season highlighted issues that affect Queenslanders facing the wrath of Mother Nature and the volunteers who will bravely respond. Amidst all this concern and all this uncertainty, we also learned that we have facilities under the control of this government that are used by volunteers that have no toilets. It is like some sort of a Third World country.

The disrespect that this government has shown to emergency volunteers in Queensland is simply unacceptable. It is time for this government to release the reports. It is time for transparency. It is time to show those volunteers and those emergency service workers the respect they deserve. It is all well and good for the Premier to issue a warning for the upcoming cyclone and bushfire season, but more importantly we need to know that Queenslanders have confidence that our emergency services have the staff, the resources and the structure that they need to do their job.

If the rumoured changes are supported by these reports, the minister should say so. If not, the minister should explain why taxpayer funds were wasted. It is the least he can do for Queenslanders and the least he can do for Queensland's emergency volunteers.