




Speech By
Hon. Mark Ryan

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Fire and Emergency Services

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (9.55 am): Mr Speaker, I begin by acknowledging the brave Queenslanders of our dedicated Fire and Emergency Services agencies who are in the gallery today. It is great for them to join us for this important announcement.

This morning I announced a number of key reforms that will deliver better fire and emergency services for a safer Queensland. These changes followed an independent review of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services which also considered the findings of the State Emergency Service review and the Blue Water Review, among others. I table these reviews and the government's response for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: KPMG report, dated 21 November 2021, titled 'Independent Review of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services: Prepared for Queensland Fire and Emergency Services: Final Report' [1744](#).

Tabled paper: Report by Mr Campbell Darby DSC AM, dated 13 March 2020, titled 'SES Review: "Sustaining the SES-Partnering for Change"' [1745](#).

Tabled paper: Report by Mr Campbell Darby DSC AM, titled 'Review into the Volunteer Marine Rescue Organisations in Queensland—Blue Water Review' [1746](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland government, titled 'Good Jobs and Better Fire and Emergency Services to Support Queensland's Great Lifestyle' [1747](#).

In relation to the QFES independent review, the government has carefully considered the recommendations alongside the findings of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management's review into the South-East Queensland rainfall and flooding event and has resolved to accept all recommendations in principle with the exception of recommendation 12, which was not accepted. Recommendation 12 relates to the introduction of a new levy. Not only does this government reject that recommendation but this government is also acutely aware of cost-of-living pressures facing Queenslanders, and we will do everything we can to provide cost-of-living relief for Queenslanders.

To implement the recommendations the Palaszczuk government will commit more than \$400 million over the next four years, investing in almost 500 additional frontline personnel and delivering better frontline services for all Queenslanders. These reforms will ensure Queensland is best positioned to respond to the ongoing and expected intensification of impacts from natural disasters, including bushfires and floods, as a result of climate change.

They will see a restructure of emergency and fire services which will include the creation of a dedicated Fire Services Department and the transition of the State Emergency Service, volunteer marine rescue services and disaster management functions to the Queensland Police Service. The change will respect and maintain the identity of these rightly proud services. The State Emergency Service, Marine Rescue Queensland and the Rural Fire Service will all become separate entities within their respective host departments with their own dedicated budgets. The significant additional funding

and resourcing provided will see a watershed investment in these volunteer entities, enhancing service delivery with more personnel and more equipment. There will also be a boost to the ranks of the Fire and Rescue Service by bettering our election commitment and now delivering 500 firefighters over six years—all up, an extra 143 firefighters.

To oversee these critical reforms the government will stand up a reform implementation task force led by State Disaster Coordinator Steve Gollschewski. The task force will ensure that the required changes will be undertaken in a measured and considered way and will not have any impact on preparations and responses to the upcoming severe weather season.

Importantly, I would like to assure all QFES employees that this Labor government values job security both now and into the future. It always has and it always will. To the members of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, we thank you for all you do. You do your job, you do your duty, and now it is time for us to work with you as we together build better fire and emergency services for Queensland.

The approach that the government is taking has been welcomed by stakeholders, and many of them are in the gallery this morning. These outstanding Queenslanders dedicate themselves to keeping us safe and we owe them a debt of gratitude. While I would never wish to upset you, Mr Speaker, or the standing orders, I take this opportunity to applaud these brave Queenslanders and I invite other members to do so—thank you, members. I also acknowledge—and it is unusual to do so—a member of my team, Nick Barter, for his exceptional policy work in respect of this proposal.

Queensland experiences more natural disasters than any other state in the country, and it is crucial that we continue to be well prepared. These changes will provide better alignment of services and allow the state to enhance its disaster and emergency response into the future. More personnel, more resources, focused services, better alignment—I am proud of this government commitment.