



Speech By  
**Ann Leahy**


**MEMBER FOR WARREGO**

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**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Bushfires, Tara**

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (2.52 pm): Since this House met two weeks ago we have seen some of the worst bushfires in the last 40 years across Queensland. Some are still burning. Sadly, in the north-west an aircraft was lost and its crew lost their lives near McKinlay. Tragically, at Tara two people lost their lives. One was well known to local support agencies. I extend my deepest condolences to the family and friends of those who have lost their loved ones.

There are other fires around the state including the Carnarvon bushfire, which is still burning. That fire has burnt through about 350,000 hectares and it is still burning. At Wallangarra and Dalveen, which the member for Southern Downs and I visited, we heard about the lovegrass—or 'kerosene grass' as the locals call it—that fuelled the intensity of the grassfires in that area. That is why it is so important to do burn-offs along the roadsides, a process that the Rural Fire Service volunteers tell me has been burdened with unnecessary compliance requirements by this state Labor government.

I would like to extend my thanks to the many departmental agencies, volunteers, not-for-profits and local governments, landholders and farmers across the state who have been at the front line of these fires—and many still are. Local government staff from the bushfire impacted areas have gone beyond the call of duty. Other council staff from across the state have been lent to assist these councils. In my electorate I want to single out the Tara Neighbourhood Centre and their staff. They have been tireless workers for those impacted in the December 2022 fire, the February 2023 fire and the October 2023 fire. Approximately 53 dwellings and many other structures have been destroyed by the Tara fire. There are nearly as many structures destroyed as dwellings and most do not have insurance.

Tara is grateful for the assistance of the caravans and the cabins that are being erected at the Tara Caravan Park. However, it will be a very long recovery process. There are people, though, like Janette Lacy of Billabong Lane, who lost her home in the February bushfires. Janette has been living in a shipping container for the last nine months. It is very important that all those people who lost their homes in the February fires at Tara are not left behind in the recovery process.

It is also important in the recovery process that there be greater bushfire prevention in the Tara residential estates, like the removal of vegetation at the home the Premier saw during her visit to Tara. There need to be more firebreaks, more breaks that are wide enough to enable the movement of machinery and more prevention in all areas of the state. You need to be able to ensure you can get dozers and graders along a lot of those firebreaks, which at present are not sufficiently wide. Prevention is absolutely critical to reduce the frequency and intensity of these bushfire disasters. We are only just at the beginning of the bushfire season and we have seen incredible bushfires across this state.