



Speech By  
**Deb Frecklington**


**MEMBER FOR NANANGO**

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Record of Proceedings, 25 October 2023

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Nanango Electorate; Drought, Bushfires**

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (7.06 pm): Drought is not on the way: it is already here, and it has been for many months. Primary producers across my electorate of Nanango have been dealing with drought conditions for some time, and I note that this is spread over much of southern Queensland. These ongoing extremely dry conditions are being experienced from Somerset to the Gympie region in the north. I know that these conditions will extend across many parts of Queensland.

I have recently written to the minister for agriculture, calling out for our local drought committee to be reconvened to consider an early drought declaration; however, the response I received did not address this request. While I understand there is currently a review of how drought declarations are made, I say to the minister that while he is happy to wait for this review to be released, people who are living in the daily grip of drought cannot wait. Landholders need to know what is going on. Thanks to the Palaszczuk government, we no longer have a dedicated DAF employee within the South Burnett. They have sacked them, got rid of them. The Palaszczuk government needs to know this is a dire situation that will be recognised, and I call on the minister for agriculture to act.

Turning to another topic, I would like to extend my deep condolences to the families who have lost loved ones as a result of the current fires in and around Tara. My thoughts are for those landholders whose livelihoods have been wrecked because of those devastating fires. Not only are these landholders dealing with starving livestock and dry dams; some have been hit with bushfires across my electorate, destroying farming infrastructure and whatever precious feed they may have still had in the paddock. This occurred a few weeks ago in the Cooyar region of the Nanango electorate. I would like to acknowledge Ted and Rosalie Cole, Rowena and Shane Gibson, Gavin and Christine Close and Paty and Lloyd Muller—property owners who have lost fences, cattle yards, sheds, tanks, timber and other much needed infrastructure in this fire. There are many others who were also affected. I know that the Cooyar region has been extremely hard-hit by this event.

I spoke with rural firey Wayne Scheff, who told me the fire was very fast moving, with local wind gusts up to 73 kilometres an hour. Nearly 2,000 acres was burned in only a couple of hours, and it was only through the rural fireies' determination that it was stopped before entering into dense bushland and locals' homes. I certainly know that Ted and Rosalie are very lucky their home is still standing.

I also thank local Cooyar police officer Olivia Hetherington who has been invaluable in keeping everyone safe during and after the fire. I am calling on QFES and the Labor government to acknowledge this Cooyar fire as a local disaster event so these property owners can access the assistance that the Deputy Premier is giving to other regions which have been declared, like Deepwater, Baffle Creek and Tara. I believe the Cooyar area also should be declared.