



Speech By  
**Hon. Dr Steven Miles**


**MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA**

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Record of Proceedings, 14 November 2023

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Bushfires

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure) (9.45 am): In recent weeks communities from the New South Wales border to our state's Far North have had fires raging on their doorsteps. Since 21 October more than 1,000 vegetation fires have been reported around Queensland. More than 130 structures have been lost to the flames. More than 60 households were assisted with emergency accommodation in hotels, motels and caravans in the Western Downs alone. It is estimated that 729 kilometres of fencing, 32 kilometres of private roads and 301 kilometres of levees and channels have also been damaged.

Queensland's firefighters, including our Rural Fire Service, assisted by volunteers from interstate, have done an incredible job to keep communities safe and protect properties from bushfires. Last week, alongside Queensland Reconstruction Authority CEO Major General Jake Ellwood, I visited communities hit hard by the fires—Tara, Dalby and, with the member for Bundaberg, Bundaberg and Childers. The people I met with have been through some of the worst experiences possible, yet there was a determination to keep going, to rebuild their lives in the wake of the disaster. As they rebuild, we will be there with them until the job is done.

With the Queensland Reconstruction Authority, we worked quickly to activate the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements to get support to affected individuals and councils as quickly as possible. By delivering disaster assistance, affected local governments were able to quickly stand up their evacuation centres and strengthen containment lines to help protect their communities.

Fodder drops have helped keep surviving livestock safe and fed, giving farmers time to make longer term plans. Immediate financial support in the form of personal hardship assistance has been made available. Uninsured residents can also access income tested grants up to \$5,000 per household to reconnect damaged services such as electricity, gas and water. So far more than \$420,000 in hardship payments have been made to more than 2,000 eligible Queenslanders from 15 local government areas—numbers that will continue to increase. In the Western Downs, 23 caravans will be moved to the Tara showgrounds and are currently providing temporary accommodation for 13 temporary households.

We are also supporting primary producers significantly affected by Friday night's hailstorm in the Lockyer Valley. Some impacted producers are eligible for disaster assistance loans of up to \$250,000 and freight assistance to help with emergency repairs to equipment, fencing and machinery as a result of the storm. Even after bushfires, storms and other disasters are brought under control, the recovery journey is often only just beginning—and we will be with Queenslanders every step of the way.