



Speech By

**Bruce Saunders**


**MEMBER FOR MARYBOROUGH**

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**EMERGENCY SERVICES REFORM AMENDMENT BILL; STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE BILL; MARINE RESCUE QUEENSLAND BILL; DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

**Second Reading (Cognate Debate)**

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (10.57 am): I rise to speak on this cognate debate of the State Emergency Service Bill, the Marine Rescue Queensland Bill and the bill that deals with fires and the rural fires. I would like to start by congratulating both ministers: the former minister, Minister Ryan, and also the new minister, Minister Boyd. They have done a marvellous job on this. There is a complete difference. We will talk about my coastguard first of all. They are very happy with what is happening because now they will not have to pay for their own uniforms. Now they will not have to sell sausages at the shopping centre in front of that well-known hardware store. Now they know that their boats are going to be put on a list to be replaced, like the rural fires' trucks. Now they know they will have more time for training and to be out looking after people on the water.

My coastguard are very happy with the transition. In fact, my coastguard are going to put up a statue of Minister Ryan because they are getting a brand new rescue boat out of this. I would like to thank the minister for talking to my coastguard volunteers. We know what a big part they play in marine rescue in the sandy straits. We cannot do without them. I often talk to my Boonooroo coastguard. They are very happy. In fact, they were the first coastguard to get on board with this because they saw the benefits that the Labor government was giving them. Who can imagine being a volunteer and having to pay for your own uniform? Now the uniforms will be supplied. Who can imagine having to pay for their own training? That is all taken care of now. It was very good to talk to the department and the minister's office about the new boat.

I also want to talk about the great work that the SES does in my area, and the SES will now come under the auspices of the police. After talking to volunteers in the Maryborough electorate, they are keen to go back under the QPS regime and work with the QPS. They are very pleased with that because, originally, that is how it used to be—that is, the SES came under the police. There are many great benefits happening, and this is all being done by a Labor government—a government that respects and values volunteers in our community. That is what we do: we value and we respect our volunteers. All we have heard from those opposite about these bills is whingeing and whining that they do not have enough time to do a bit of self-promotion—do a bit of dancing around for themselves—instead of talking about the great things that are happening in these bills and the benefits for the volunteers in my electorate.

I now want to talk about my favourite subject—that is, rural fires. The rural fires in my area do a magnificent job. There will be a big announcement in the Maryborough electorate shortly thanks to Minister Ryan and Minister Boyd with regard to the rural fires in the Maryborough electorate. This is going to be a first for Queensland, and it could only be achieved under a Labor government because it

looks after our volunteers. There are a lot of rumours and stories going around. Yesterday we heard from the member for Burnett that the world was going to collapse in terms of the rural fires and everything was going to go wrong and pear-shaped. That is totally different to what I am hearing, because I have been talking to my rural fires and they are very happy. Which government brought in legislation to help our rural fires so that they got their fuel, their insurances, their vehicles—

**Mr Skelton:** Maintenance.

**Mr SAUNDERS:**—as well as maintenance on those vehicles? I take that interjection from the member for Nicklin because he knows. He talks to his rural fires. He is out on the ground, not like the other candidate in Nicklin who just walks around and does nothing all day. This member is out there all day and is a former firefighter, so he knows exactly what is going on, and that is why he is a good member for Nicklin. When we talk to the rural fires in our electorates, they tell us how great it is under a Labor government because they do not have to go out there on the weekends and rattle the can for people to give a dollar because they get what they need—

**Mr Whiting** interjected.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** I take that interjection. They get what they need from the Labor government. This government has facilitated world-class rural fires. When there were floods in Maryborough, the rural fires were outstanding. They hosed out all of the businesses that had flooded. When you are on the road a lot, the rural fires are sometimes the first responders. They are there, especially in regional communities on rural roads. I have to make a disclaimer: I am very well associated with the Aldershot Rural Fire Brigade. I want to give a shout-out to its first officer Craig Smith, Jay and the crew. I work very well with them.

**Mr Ryan:** Hear, hear! Good bloke.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** The former minister, Minister Ryan, just interjected and, yes, Craig is a tremendous man and one of the best rural fires you will ever come across. We are trying to dispel the myths. Dare I say it, but we are trying to put the fires out that members of the LNP are going around starting.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** This bill does not change incidental arrangements. A yellow truck does not have to wait for a red truck to respond to operations first, so that is another myth by the LNP debunked by this side of the House. Those opposite were going around saying, 'The red trucks have to turn up and we're second rate.' That is absolute rubbish that has been circulating around the rural fires.

One of the good things coming out of this legislation is the advisory committee with strong—and I repeat, strong—volunteer representation. This advisory committee will be advising the minister on rural fires, and that is what a great Labor government does—we listen to the volunteers, we respect them and we fund them. There is something that we give the volunteers that the other side never gave them: we give them the equipment to do their jobs, and we literally give it to them.

Besides trains, I do have another passion, and it is the fire station in Maryborough. It is absolutely brilliant. It is the first timber fire station in the history of Queensland. Not only does the Labor side of the House look after volunteers; we look after our frontline services. We always do, and we saw that earlier today with the minister's bill introduction. We are always looking after frontline services and community safety. One thing about which I will always be proud as the local member is the brand new fire station in Maryborough. This fire station—

**Mr Ryan:** Hear, hear!

**Mr SAUNDERS:** Thank you, Minister. The minister could not be there to open it—

**Mr Ryan:** I was there virtually, though.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** He was there virtually. It was a great day. This timber fire station is the first in Queensland. The big thing about this fire station is that it is built for many years to come given how modern it is. It was built out of timber that was grown in the Maryborough electorate, processed in the Maryborough electorate and built by workers from the Maryborough electorate.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** Not only is Minister Furner the farmer's friend; he is also the timberman's friend. That station is fantastic. I support these bills. As I said earlier, I want to thank both ministers because both ministers have worked really hard on this legislation. There was consultation from the rural fires in Maryborough on Monday night at one of the hotels. A lot of rural fires turned up to get the facts about this bill, not the myths and the rubbish and the misinformation that has been spread around about these bills. I commend the bills to the House.