



Speech By  
**Dr Christian Rowan**


**MEMBER FOR MOGGILL**

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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)**

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (3.35 pm): I rise to address the cognate debate on the Emergency Services Reform Amendment Bill, the State Emergency Service Bill, the Marine Rescue Queensland Bill and the Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. From the outset, I want to acknowledge the significant contribution made by countless local residents, volunteers and personnel who make up our incredible local emergency service units and agencies within the electorate of Moggill and more broadly the western suburbs of Brisbane, including the Kenmore Ambulance Station, the Brookfield Rural Fire Brigade, the Indooroopilly Police Station, the Karana Downs Police Station, the Inner West Crime Prevention Unit and the Queensland Police Service officers based at Bellbowrie. I also wish to acknowledge the service and contribution of emergency services personnel and volunteers at our Pullenvale Fire and Rescue Station, the Pinjarra Hills Ambulance Station, the Moggill Group SES and the Karana Downs Fire and Rescue Station.

As we know, Queensland has a reputation for its tumultuous severe weather seasons and resultant natural disasters. Our seasons can often be sudden and unpredictable, with storms and natural disaster events presenting a perpetual challenge for local communities. Whether it is floods, bushfires or severe storms, our state has to endure life with significant severe and unpredictable weather events and the barrage of nature's fury. This includes local communities within the electorate of Moggill.

Amidst the turbulence and disruption, Queensland's emergency services have always stood as unwavering pillars of community support. As we see time and again, the extraordinary resilience and dedication of our emergency service personnel often assists in mitigating the social and community impacts of these disasters. These brave men and women exemplify the best of Queensland and its spirit of selflessness, often risking their lives to rescue stranded individuals, provide essential aid and restore normality to affected communities.

As the state member for Moggill, I have witnessed many such extraordinary acts of service and dedication to our local community where our emergency services have gone above and beyond to ensure the preservation of life and the protection of property.

In addressing this debate, I particularly want to focus my contribution on specific matters of disaster management and elements of these various pieces of legislation as they pertain to the electorate of Moggill and the western suburbs of Brisbane. In particular, I wish to address elements related to the Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024.

I acknowledge that this legislation will formally establish the role of the State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator within the Disaster Management Act, which was a key recommendation of the review led by the Inspector-General Emergency Management. This legislation will also strengthen the appointment process and expands the functions and operations of the State Recovery Coordinator. I also acknowledge that amendments in this legislation will emphasise that a guiding principle of the Disaster Management Act is that consideration should be given to the improvement of the resilience of a community across the four phases of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery when planning for disaster management.

Following the severe flood and weather events of February and March 2022, I provided detailed submissions to both the *Brisbane City Council 2022—flood review*, led by the former governor of Queensland, the Hon. Paul de Jersey AC, CVO, QC, and to the Queensland state government's *South East Queensland rainfall and flooding—February to March 2022 review*, led by the Queensland Inspector-General Emergency Management, Alistair Dawson. I also welcomed the then Queensland State Recovery Coordinator, Major General Jake Ellwood Rtd DSC, AM, CSC to the electorate of Moggill, where I accompanied Major General Ellwood on a visit to locally affected suburbs to assess planned recovery strategies, plans and infrastructure works.

As I highlighted in my submissions, and as I have also provided through written correspondence and in speeches to the Queensland parliament, there are specific disaster management, infrastructure, coordination and other matters that must be addressed for local residents in the electorate of Moggill. These matters include specific localities and communities within the electorate of Moggill that suffer geographical isolation during times of severe rainfall and subsequent flooding. To that end I have been consistently calling for, and supporting, the formal designation of Mount Crosby State School, including its hall and associated facilities, as an approved community support centre to be activated during natural disaster events.

I have previously provided letters of support to the federal member for Blair and again provided another letter of support in February of this year trying to get urgent action to be undertaken by both the Queensland and federal Labor governments to enable the release of funding by the Australian federal government's Disaster Ready Fund to enable essential infrastructure upgrades at this location to better support local residents. It is disappointing that both the Labor state and federal governments have refused to act on this thus far. I would specifically call on Senator the Hon. Murray Watt, federal Minister for Emergency Management, to prioritise funding and work collaboratively with the Queensland Minister for Fire and Disaster Recovery.

I also want to reiterate the calls of local residents who are seeking a dedicated ambulance station to enable better service delivery for local residents of Karana Downs, Mount Crosby and surrounding suburbs. The lack of a dedicated station was a significant concern during the natural disaster events of 2022. The geographical isolation experienced by local residents, particularly of Mount Crosby, Karana Downs, Lake Manchester and Kholo during the 2022 severe weather event and natural disaster also underscored the need for the urgent progression of the new Mount Crosby vehicle bridge, which I have long been advocating for over many years. I am pleased to confirm that this bridge has now been completed and opened, servicing residents of both the electorates of Moggill and Ipswich West, although community concerns remain in relation to the deck height of the bridge and its flood immunity.

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the LNP's member for Ipswich West, Darren Zanow MP, who understands the importance of local infrastructure, flood resilience and service delivery across our shared regional communities.

In relation to other communities in the electorate of Moggill, there are a number that also experienced the devastating impacts of natural disasters and geographical isolation including, but not limited to, Bellbowrie and Moggill, and there needs to be an ongoing examination of how this is managed. During the severe weather and flooding event of 2022 I worked hard, along with Councillor Greg Adermann, councillor for the Pullenvale Ward, to support local residents who were experiencing significant hardship and serious impacts as a result of the lack of coordination across disaster management agencies pertaining to local, state and federal governments. Whilst I acknowledge the various changes that have been implemented following the 2022 floods and the additional cross-agency and disaster management coordination changes that will be further facilitated through the passage of these pieces of legislation, there are still ongoing issues relating to local residents who are trying to seek a satisfactory disaster recovery solution.

I am continuing to support a local Kenmore resident who has been rejected multiple times through the voluntary home buyback program despite neighbouring and similarly affected properties being eligible and purchased under this scheme. These are also matters which I have previously provided written correspondence on to the Queensland state government.

Finally, I want to briefly address the proposed changes to the Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990. In particular, I draw to the state government's attention the submission provided to the Queensland parliament's Community Safety and Legal Affairs Committee by Mr Michael Gordon, a constituent of the Moggill electorate and longstanding member of the Brookfield Rural Fire Brigade for over 25 years. As the LNP's shadow minister for fire and emergency services articulated earlier in his contribution, there have been a number of elements of these changes which have raised further questions. There have also been significant concerns with regard to the Queensland state government's insufficient consultation and communication with our dedicated urban and rural fire brigades. Such concerns were also highlighted by Mr Gordon, who stated in his submission that he was surprised that the Labor government's proposed legislation could have progressed as far as it had without 'any sort of feedback by whom it may affect', and, secondly, 'that there was only seven days made available to provide a submission'. Such limited consultation and time frames for feedback is completely unacceptable. This is yet another example of the state Labor government's failure to treat Queenslanders with respect and comprehensively listen to their concerns.

In the electorate of Moggill our urban and rural fire brigades provide an invaluable service to our community, including for residents of Anstead, Brookfield, Upper Brookfield, Mount Crosby, Karana Downs, Kholo, Kenmore Hills, Kenmore, Chapel Hill, Moggill, Bellbowrie and other surrounding suburbs. This includes in the preparation and response in times of disaster, particularly when it comes to fires. I again reiterate my calls to the state Labor government to work in further collaboration with other agencies and levels of government to enhance bushfire preparedness for communities in the electorate of Moggill, including the consideration and provision of additional resourcing and communication. When it comes to emergency services and disaster management, there is still more that must be done to improve the resilience of our communities and ensure the timely and efficient coordination of all agencies when preparing and responding to natural disasters.

Finally, and in concluding my contribution, I wish to highlight the extraordinary decline and decay that is occurring with respect to democratic processes here in Queensland in the parliament under this state Labor government. This debate has involved the combining of four pieces of legislation as part of a cognate debate. The allocated 10 minutes for many elected representatives to address this substantial vote is entirely inadequate given there may be unintended consequences which may occur because of the lack of scrutiny that cannot be undertaken as part of this debate due to these time constraints. Queenslanders deserve better.