



Speech By  
**Dale Last**


**MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN**

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Record of Proceedings, 11 September 2024

## **ADJOURNMENT**

### **Rural Fire Service**

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (9.00 pm): In just eight years, 24 per cent of Queensland's Rural Fire Service volunteers have walked out the door. More than 8,600 brave volunteers have hung up their helmets, and the blame for that sits squarely at the feet of this government. This is the government that gave rural fire volunteers just seven days to respond to legislation that directly affected them. When it comes to the appliances that the volunteers rely upon, it is clear that 30 years of volunteer knowledge and experience has effectively been ignored.

As members are aware, volunteers have previously raised concerns about the roadworthiness of appliances, but clearly this government does not listen, given the concerns raised relating to the new fleet of appliances being supplied across the state. The list of concerns is a long one, and we are not speaking about minor issues here. For example, I am advised that the size of the appliance means it simply will not fit on some fire tracks and that the new appliances will actually carry fewer personnel. Believe it or not, the new appliances approved by this government only carry enough water to operate for 90 seconds, and due to the electrical system not operating correctly, brigades have been forced to actually jump-start their appliances.

Just when you think it could not get worse than an emergency vehicle needing to be jump-started, it does. Sometimes the technical jargon can make things difficult to understand, but the term 'bushfire' surely implies that these appliances will need to be taken off the road and in fact the appliances are four-wheel drives. According to the instruction manual, the appliances are 'designed to be driven on sealed and formed unsealed roads'. If it was not so serious, it would be funny.

While the minister is more concerned about media opportunities, volunteers are concerned about touchscreens that do not work, a lack of storage for their equipment and a gearbox that quite simply is not appropriate for the hilly terrain that brigades often operate in. While taxpayers will ultimately bear the cost of fixing the issues, the cost may be even greater for our volunteers—with some volunteers stating that these appliances pose a risk to the lives of volunteers.

Our volunteers deserve to be supported. They deserve to have the resources and the training they need to do their job effectively and in a safe manner. Queenslanders are seeing a stream of brave volunteers walking out the door under Labor's watch. The only way to address the exodus and the only way to change Labor's chaos and crisis is to change this government on 26 October because our volunteers, and particularly our rural firefighters, deserve to be supported. We rely on those firefighters in our time of need and they should not want for anything.