



Speech By  
**Laura Gerber**


**MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN**

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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)**

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (6.26 pm): We are incredibly lucky on the southern Gold Coast to have some fantastic local heroes serving us in our rural fire brigades and our local fire and emergency services. On behalf of our community, I want to thank the Tallebudgera rural fire brigade and their fantastic committee of officers, including chair Michael Laird, secretary Niki Naday, treasurer Susan Smith, first officer Ben Naday, second officer Joshua Hughes, third officer John Irwin, fifth officer Matthew Rynne, sixth officer Jackson Baker and seventh officer James Leuschner. A massive thankyou to our fantastic team at the Currumbin Valley Rural Fire Brigade, including chair Mike Verner, secretary Michelle Cotton, treasurer Marleen Verner, first officer Steven Dalton, second officer Debbie Holland, third officer Joe Squire, fourth officer Marcus Edwards, fifth officer David Cotton and sixth officer Jaya Jarrot. The work they do to keep our community safe is phenomenal.

On that basis, the Currumbin rural fire brigade has asked me to put out a notification. They are currently looking for a missing person in Currumbin Valley. They are involved in a search right now for this missing person and first officer Steve Dalton has asked me to notify everyone who lives around Taylors Lane in Currumbin Valley that police are searching for a 39-year-old man, Patrick Liedke, who has been missing since last Monday. Patrick is described as being of Caucasian appearance, solid build, 183 centimetres tall with short brown hair and brown eyes. The search is continuing today in Currumbin Valley and also in Cobaki, the Piggabeen area and on the New South Wales side of the border with the Rural Fire Service of Queensland, police and SES assisting. Anyone who has seen Patrick or may have any information regarding him is urged to please urgently call Crime Stoppers on 1800333000. I thank our Currumbin Valley Rural Fire Brigade for continuing the search for Patrick. For me, this particularly highlights the amazing work our rural fires do and how important it is that they are supported.

The Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, among other things, amends the Fire and Emergency Services Act to establish Queensland Fire and Rescue and the Rural Fire Service Queensland as two separate services within the Queensland Fire Department. In relation to the structure of the new Queensland Fire Department and in particular how brigades and members of the Rural Fire Service Queensland fit into that structure, there are more questions than answers. The LNP's shadow minister has outlined those questions. Because the debate will be guillotined today and I will not have the time to outline those questions, I will not go through them. However, I really look forward to the minister's reply. In particular and of significant importance to our local rural fires is a guarantee from the minister that locally raised funds will be preserved for the exclusive use of the brigade to which the donation was made. They do such a fantastic job. The example I have given here today is a prime example of that. I urge the minister to come to the table with an assurance that the funds that they have raised will be available for their use.

I also want to speak to the part of this bill that deals with the Marine Rescue Queensland Bill. I want to take this opportunity to give a massive shout-out to the fantastic VMR team in Currumbin: president Michael Brooks; vice president Ray Boak; secretary Margaret Jackson; treasurer Brian Ramsey; and committee members Rick Taylor and Trevor Andrews. Our fantastic VMR team do such an amazing job to support our community when they are using our waterways, beaches and open seas.

They regularly run sausage sizzles to support their organisation. As a result of their efforts, they were able to raise enough money to purchase some jet skis. Those jet skis were recently used to get out of the bar at low tide—they cannot get out of the bar at low tide using boats; they need the jet skis—to rescue some divers. The divers were diving off Palm Beach Reef. In rough seas their anchor detached from their boat. They lost track of their boat and they were floating in the open seas. Our marine rescue volunteers used the jet skis to get out there and rescue those divers. That is the great work they are doing in our community to keep us safe on the waterways and in the open seas.

It is because of them raising that money themselves that they were able to purchase those jet skis. It was thanks to the hard work of the volunteers that they raised the money to buy what was needed particularly in Currumbin so they can get out of the bar at low tide and perform those rescues. On behalf of the Currumbin electorate, I thank them for their wonderful work—both the volunteers and the whole committee. I want those amazing guys and girls to know that we are so grateful for what they do for us out in the open seas and on the waterways.

In relation to the Marine Rescue Queensland Bill, it aims to establish Marine Rescue Queensland as a statewide marine service. The bill has some consequential amendments to facilitate the government's objectives and amendments to facilitate the objectives of the other bills which are part of this cognate debate. Mostly it creates a single statewide marine rescue service. That single statewide marine rescue service is supported by our fantastic volunteers at VMR Currumbin.

There is some concern that just two months from the deadline this government has not in fact created the Marine Rescue Queensland body that it needs to create. My volunteers are very concerned that that body has not been created yet. They are very concerned that the minister needs to do better when it comes to consultation with them. They would like more consultation on how that body is going to be created and how it is going to be set up.

I also note that the shadow minister has raised some very significant questions that the minister needs to answer in relation to how the volunteer marine rescue set-up will work and how Marine Rescue Queensland will be set up, particularly in relation to the funds that each of these volunteer organisations raised, as in the example that I gave. Our marine rescue volunteers volunteered their time to raise money to buy those jet skis.