




Speech By
Hon. Nikki Boyd

MEMBER FOR PINE RIVERS

Record of Proceedings, 12 September 2024

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Queensland Fire Department, Culture

 **Hon. N BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (Minister for Fire and Disaster Recovery and Minister for Corrective Services) (2.22 pm): The new Queensland Fire Department sets up Queensland Fire and Rescue and the Rural Fire Service as two separate entities within the same organisation with their own separate budgets. Importantly, this gives volunteers in the Rural Fire Service the same legal protections as professional firefighters when they are carrying out their duties.

I remind the House that the LNP voted against these legal protections. As RFBAQ President Ian Pike told me—

The new arrangements that increase support for RFS through more paid staff and better protection for volunteers have been well received by most brigades.

This is in stark contrast to the LNP's record in government which detailed cutting 56 of the 117 paid staff in the Rural Fire Service. We are increasing our front line by 114 positions in our record uplift. The new Queensland Fire Department is a unique chance to define a new culture that embraces diversity. To do this, a speak-up culture is vitally important. That is why the Commissioner and I have been clear—speaking up is the way to address inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour. If you are experiencing it, report it. Doing so means your complaints can be dealt with in a sensitive and appropriate manner. If you see it, never walk by it. Reporting it means perpetrators can be dealt with and support can be provided. We all have a voice and I am encouraging volunteers and paid employees to always use theirs.

I can further advise that a sexual harassment contact officer network contained within the Queensland Fire Department will be up and running by the end of this month. This is a group of people tasked with being an approachable contact point for people seeking assistance in addressing sexual harassment. While the initial deployment to this role has three people, I have asked the Queensland Fire Department to monitor its use and effectiveness and increase its resourcing, if deemed necessary.

Queensland Fire Department staff and volunteers are good people who are doing good things in our community. They are the people running towards danger and keeping us safe. It is our job to support those good people and empower them to speak up against those who do not hold the Queensland Fire Department's values.