




Speech By
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Record of Proceedings, 14 February 2024

ADJOURNMENT

Highfields

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (7.07 pm): I rise to talk about a great community in the northern part of my electorate, Highfields. For some time, Highfields has been one of the fastest growing areas of Queensland. As it has grown, services have grown. When we were in government we built a high school, and the fire station now needs upgrading.

Today at Parliament House, I hosted the United Firefighters Union at a meeting with the minister and other people involved in the fire service, including the chief. What came out of that meeting that was good is that we are hoping to reach a position where the long-term service delivery that the people of Highfields need will be provided. They need a fire station. In the long-term that fire station will be a 10/14 station, but we do not necessarily need that right now. Commitments have been made but what we are looking for is a long-term solution, which is going to involve a land swap. Council needs to come to the party and swap a block of land so that we have a suitable block of land to build a station that will eventually provide a 10/14 service, giving A-class coverage to all of the people of Highfields. I thank the minister for the meeting. It was a good meeting. I look forward to that progressing in the direction that both the union and the community of Highfields would like. As that community grows, more and more pressure will be placed on the wonderful auxiliaries that have been there for so long.

I first bought in that community in the late nineties. It has been an auxiliary station for such a long time. They have provided wonderful coverage and a service. I know that, going forward, everybody wants to see a composite where both permanent and auxiliary firefighters have a facility that can meet the community's needs and can work together to provide the service communities are looking for. The real key in all of this is to make sure that as the Highfields community grows we provide the emergency frontline services required to the adequate standard. That might mean that we need some temporary facilities in the short-term that are not exactly perfect, but that is okay if we have a long-term plan.

I look forward to working with the union and getting the minister to come and have a look. We need to make sure that this fire station is delivered in the long-term for the people of Highfields. I thank everybody for today's very productive meeting. I look forward to letting the people of Highfields know that, long-term, their fire service will be exactly what they pay for and deserve.