



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**PROOF**

**Federation Chamber**

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

**Queensland: Bushfires**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 3 December 2018**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

<b>Date</b> Monday, 3 December 2018	<b>Source</b> House
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<b>Questioner</b>	<b>Responder</b>
<b>Speaker</b> O'Brien, Ted, MP	<b>Question No.</b>

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**Mr TED O'BRIEN** (Fairfax) (16:02): Blistering heatwave conditions continue across Queensland. For more than a week, temperatures have soared past 40 degrees in parts of the state, while hot, dry, westerly winds have blasted coastal districts. This situation, combined with tinder-dry vegetation, has created some of the most extreme—indeed, catastrophic—fire conditions recorded in the state of Queensland.

There are around 100 fires still burning. Some are so intense and fast moving that ancient rainforests, usually immune to the ravages of fire, are themselves ablaze. The losses to property, livestock and the environment are appalling, and, most tragically, one young life has been lost.

Whole communities will survive, nevertheless, thanks to the superhuman efforts of our fire and emergency services volunteers and professionals. In just one incident, reported by helicopter crews airlifting families from a mountain top, rural firefighters chose to stay, despite being surrounded by a ring of fire—an inferno, if you like—rather than be evacuated. It's extraordinary stuff.

Safety is paramount, and firefighters must never take unacceptable risks. But their courage and tenacity need to be commended at the highest of levels. Our heartfelt thanks to them.