



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

South Australian Bushfires

SPEECH

Wednesday, 11 February 2015

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

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Speaker Champion, Nick, MP	Question No.

Mr CHAMPION (Wakefield) (10:59): Early in the new year, the state of South Australia—and in particular my electorate—was faced with a major emergency in the emergence of the Sampson Flat bushfire. Nothing, I think, exhibits the adversity of this country quite like bushfire. It is particularly confronting to all those who have to deal with it, those people who live in bushfire-prone areas, but it also elicits a great deal of sympathy and concern from people not just in my state but around the country.

I would like to thank all those emergency service volunteers and personnel who were integral to keeping areas of my electorate and, indeed, other areas of South Australia safe. In particular I want to thank the brigades in my area: the Alma, Balaklava, Clare, Concordia, Dalkeith, Dublin, Freeling, Gawler River, Greenock, Hamley Bridge, Kapunda, Lyndoch, Mallala, Manoora, Mudla Wirra, Northern Barossa Group, Nuriootpa, One Tree Hill, Owen, Port Wakefield, Rhynie, Riverton, Roseworthy, Saddleworth, Salisbury, Shea-Oak Log, Tanunda, Tarlee, Two Wells, Virginia, Waterloo, Watervale, Williamstown and Woolshed/Wasleys brigades. I would like to thank all of those brigades for their commitment in confronting these bushfires, which were truly terrifying. If you went up to One Tree Hill or Williamstown on the days of the fires, as I did, you really were confronted by a vision of Hades. It was truly terrifying. So, to those men and women who were out in the thick of it, we extend our thanks and our appreciation for their efforts in protecting human life. We were very lucky not to have any lives lost in these bushfires, because people sensibly evacuated, and I would like to thank the residents for that.

I would particularly like to thank Captain Tom Walsh of the One Tree Hill CFS brigade. He stepped into that role just this year, and his was one of the first brigades to respond. I would like to thank Captain Justin Baxter of the Dalkeith brigade. I am a member of the brigade, but I do not do nearly as much as the captain and his crew. They, along with all the other community members, really did contribute so much. I would also like to thank Tony Piccolo, the Minister for Emergency Services, and Michael Keenan, the Minister for Justice, who both acted as you would expect, allowing the federal government, the state government and the local council all to act together to work against what was a terrible emergency in my state and in my electorate. Thank you to all of those who contributed to that effort. (*Time expired*)