



MEDIA STATEMENT



Brittany Lauga MP B Urb Dev (Urb&Reg Plan)(Hons), C.Dec

MEMBER FOR KEPPEL AND ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

21st April 2021

Lauga calls out cuts to BOM jobs and services

Federal MP Michelle Landry and National Senator Matt Canavan have been told to stop cutting local jobs and services and reverse their government's cull of the Rockhampton Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) station.

The Member for Keppel and Assistant Education Minister Brittany Lauga said in Parliament yesterday the cuts they support are "downright insulting" to Central Queenslanders.

"I call on them to reverse these devastating cuts to BoM jobs and services immediately.

"The cuts to the Rockhampton Bureau of Meteorology station by the LNP Morrison Government, and the sacking of expert forecasters and technicians, will have a devastating impact on regional weather, radar, warning and disaster services.

"Central Queensland can often have volatile weather impacting hundreds of thousands of people, and slashing these services reduces us to second class citizens as far as the Morrison Government is concerned."

The Rockhampton Bureau of Meteorology was established at the Rockhampton Airport in 1939 as an observation station, to support the aviation industry and provide weather data to the region.

Ms Lauga said BoM staff have been let go, the weather radar has been decommissioned, most of the equipment at the station has been removed.

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“This vital service is in dire straits.

“These shameful cuts affect not only the Rockhampton BOM but also the stations in Mackay, Cairns, Townsville, Charleville and Mount Isa.”

She said Central Queensland needs better meteorological advice based on expert local knowledge, and technicians based locally for equipment maintenance and repairs.

“Ours is the most decentralised state in Australia, yet this Federal Government continues to centralise services in Brisbane.

“I’m told the BoM office in Brisbane does not even have an open telephone line which the public can use.

“Boaties rely on the weather before they head out on the water, so too does our defence force during military training at Shoalwater Bay.

“The Gladstone Port, Rockhampton Airport, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service all utilise weather forecasts and observations on a daily basis.

“The Rocky BOM no longer has sonde data for this region which measures real time atmospheric pressure and a range of other important data.

“If one of our wind monitors or flood gauges needs repairing, a technician from Brisbane or Cairns has to fly in to fix it.

“Our wave buoy off Emu Park went down for several weeks before it was fixed because someone had to fly in, as did the Rundle Island wind monitor.

“Previously a locally based technician would be responsible for repairing and maintaining the equipment.”



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Ms Lauga said given CQ is one of the most disaster-affected areas in the country, our community and economy rely on reliable local weather forecasts, observations and warnings.

“That’s why a fully resourced BOM in our region is absolutely imperative.

“We need to build the BOM back better - we need more expert staff, more radars, more gauges, more monitors and more alerts.

“Automation of the Bureau and control out of Brisbane is not good enough for us.

“The LNP says it’s an ‘efficiency measure’, which is their code for cuts.


“Our region deserves a fully resourced BOM station, not more cuts to staff and services,” said Ms Lauga.

Contact John 0400787037

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 **ELECTORATE OFFICE**
Shop 6, Yeppoon Central Shopping Centre
42 Park Street, Yeppoon QLD 4703

POSTAL ADDRESS
PO Box 1474
Yeppoon QLD 4703

 (07) 4913 1500

 brittanylauga.com.au

 keppel@parliament.qld.gov.au

 [brittanylaugamp](https://www.facebook.com/brittanylaugamp)