



MEDIA STATEMENT

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

MEMBER FOR KEPPEL AND ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR EDUCATION



15 October 2021

Lauga slams Landry over cuts to BOM

Inaccurate and late forecasts and storm warnings to Central Queenslanders yesterday proves the need to keep Rockhampton's Bureau of Meteorology, according to the Member for Keppel and Assistant Education Minister Brittany Lauga.

Ms Lauga has previously called on Federal MP Michelle Landry and National Senator Matt Canavan to stop cutting local jobs and services and reverse their government's cull of the Rockhampton BoM station.

"These cuts they support are 'downright insulting' to Central Queenslanders.

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

"Closure of the Rockhampton BoM station by the LNP Morrison Government, and the sacking of expert forecasters and technicians, has shown to have a devastating impact on regional weather, radar, warning and disaster services.

"Yesterday's wild Central Queensland weather was missed by the Brisbane-based BoM officers with potentially devastating consequences to locals here.

"We're moving into the annual storm and cyclone season and late warnings will not be acceptable.

"Landry and Canavan want to slash these services reducing us to second class citizens as far as the Morrison Government is concerned."

Delivering for you in Keppel

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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.

“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.”



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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.

PHOTOS:

1. **Yeppoon beachfront during Cyclone Marcia 2015**
2. **Brittany Lauga with Premier Anastasia Palaszczuk and Transport Minister Mark Bailey at Rosslyn Bay Harbour – a key area of protection for hundreds of boats during storms.**

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