



Speech By
Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Volunteer Marine Rescue Burdekin

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (2.12 pm): In 15 days the Burdekin's Volunteer Marine Rescue Squadron will celebrate its 50th anniversary in Home Hill. Firstly, I want to congratulate and thank the hundreds if not thousands of volunteers who over the years have provided this essential and sometimes lifesaving service to boaties in the Burdekin region. However, there is a problem that needs to be resolved in the Burdekin that has a direct impact on the squadron's ability to deploy in times of emergency. Despite the assurances of this government, this Premier and this transport minister, all-tide access at Molongle Creek is still nothing but a dream.

It is not only our volunteer marine rescue crews who are affected by the multiple failings when it comes to Molongle Creek. Take Burdekin man Ross Pirrone who stood on a stonefish at Cape Upstart. Thanks to the appalling state of Molongle Creek, he could not travel for medical attention by water and no helicopter rescue was available, so instead of medical attention Mr Pirrone was told to put his foot in hot water and ride it out. As Ross himself said, what if it was a little kid who had been stung by an Irukandji?

It was not just bad for Ross. For the VMR volunteers, the lack of all-tide access meant a trip to a boat ramp 70 kilometres away and then they were left out on the water overnight. These are volunteers giving up their time to help others, yet this government will not help them, let alone the hundreds of families who visit Cape Upstart each year. It gets even worse. Despite assurances in 2018 from the Premier and in 2019 from the transport minister, maintenance dredging has still not been completed at Molongle Creek. In fact, the Whitsunday Regional Council, which were responsible for the maintenance dredging, have wiped their hands of it completely, saying it is now TMR's problem.

We are sick of the promises. We want action. Maintenance dredging was supposed to start on 2 July 2019, according to the Premier. According to the transport minister, the all-tide access project should have been underway at the same time and been completed by now. I have no doubt that Minister Ryan has received an invitation to the 50th anniversary celebrations on 26 March. May I suggest, Minister, that during that visit you enlist the help of the VMR squadron to see firsthand the debacle that is Molongle Creek.

Mr Ryan interjected.

Mr LAST: I am pleased to hear that, Minister, because maybe when you are stuck on the mud—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Through the chair please.

Mr LAST: Maybe when the minister is stuck on the mud of Molongle Creek waiting for the tide to come in, he will finally get this government to act. Whilst he is there, I hope he is going to talk about the Blue Water Review and where we are going with that, because our VMR squadrons and our coastguards in Queensland need some certainty and they need to have that situation resolved. I look forward to the minister's visit and I look forward to waving at him as he is sitting on the mud bank off Molongle Creek.