



**Southern Downs**  
REGIONAL COUNCIL

# **ATTACHMENTS TO MINUTES ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING**

**25 FEBRUARY 2026**



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16 February 2026

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Hon Daniel Purdie  
Minister for Police and Emergency Services  
PO Box 15195  
CITY EAST QLD 4002  
Email: [police@ministerial.qld.gov.au](mailto:police@ministerial.qld.gov.au)

Dear Minister

I am writing to respectfully request consideration of a formal multi-agency After Action Review under the disaster management framework in relation to the recent bushfire event that impacted the Karara community.

The seriousness of this event cannot be overstated. The township of Karara was effectively surrounded by fire, homes were threatened, and residents faced a rapidly escalating situation with very limited warning, if any. Of particular concern were vulnerable members of the community, including people with disability and others who may not have been able to evacuate safely or quickly without coordinated assistance.

Despite the scale and level of risk, the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) was not formally activated. This has raised concern within the community and more broadly about whether information flows, risk assessments and activation thresholds operated as intended under the disaster management arrangements.

There is also a broader concern about whether lessons identified from previous major fire events in the Southern Downs, including the Wallangarra fire, have been fully embedded in practice. Those events highlighted the importance of early situational awareness, proactive coordination and a precautionary approach to disaster posture. The circumstances experienced at Karara suggest there would be value in reviewing how those lessons have been applied.

Residents of Karara have expressed a strong sense of vulnerability and uncertainty about how close the community came to a major loss event. In that context, I respectfully submit that a structured review would assist in understanding:

- The timeline of fire behaviour escalation and the level of risk to the township
- What information was known by operational agencies, and when
- What advice, if any, was provided to the Local Disaster Coordinator and LDMG Chair
- The considerations informing the decision not to activate the LDMG or alter disaster posture
- Whether current thresholds and communication processes remain appropriate when a community becomes isolated or surrounded by fire

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- Any opportunities to strengthen inter-agency coordination, situational awareness or community warning
- The extent to which learnings from previous events, including Wallangarra, have been implemented

Given that this incident involved multiple agencies operating within the framework of the Disaster Management Act 2003 (Qld), a multi-agency After Action Review conducted through the appropriate district and state disaster management arrangements would, in my view, provide the most constructive and comprehensive pathway for system learning.

To support community confidence, I would also appreciate consideration being given to making the findings and any recommended actions publicly available.

This request is made in the spirit of continuous improvement and community safety. The Karara event represents a significant near-miss for a small rural community, and I believe there is a strong opportunity to reinforce confidence that the disaster management system will respond proactively when communities face escalating and potentially isolating threats.

I would be grateful for your advice on whether such a review could be considered, and on the process and timeframe should it proceed.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and for your ongoing leadership in strengthening disaster management across regional Queensland.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Joel Richters