



Speech by

John-Paul Langbroek

MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

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SOUTH-EAST QUEENSLAND FLOODS

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.54 am), by leave: I want to thank the government for according me the opportunity to make a statement on behalf of the opposition. We have just heard a number of government ministers speaking about the difficulties that their workers and many people in Queensland have experienced over the last 36 hours—a disaster that we have seen especially in South-East Queensland. I want to acknowledge the work of all of these government departments and workers who are doing so much on behalf of fellow Queenslanders.

I think it is important, though, that we acknowledge that there have been similar occurrences over the last few months and over the last year in North and Far North Queensland, and many of these people in Brisbane as well as in North Queensland have had to go through this again. I think it is important that we acknowledge the difficulties they go through. Sometimes when the media scrutiny and media glare have passed they are still there dealing with the property damage and the personal damage that has affected them.

I want to acknowledge the SES volunteers for helping their communities. Where would we be without them? I want to thank the various local disaster management groups working in the wider region. I will be seeking a briefing tomorrow on my own area of the Gold Coast, which I know has been hard hit, either from the local disaster management group or the SES. I note that there have been some great stories of neighbourly goodwill, of people saving each other and saving other people's properties. One of our opposition staff was even put up by a good neighbour in the area of Brookfield when he could not get home. They spent the evening together in some stranger's house, sharing food and providing a bed. That is a great thing that Queenslanders can do for each other.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation. This is a serious topic. The Leader of the Opposition deserves the courtesy of the House.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to make particular mention, as the honourable Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services has, of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service's swift-water rescue teams which are saving many lives as they risk their own. I note the minister mentioned that there have been more than 20 cases—I think it was 22 cases. Many of us as local members have been to award ceremonies at which we see volunteers and professionals receiving their awards, but last night and this morning we have seen cases of these men and women really putting their lives on the line.

Many rescues have been of motorists who have foolishly driven into floodwaters over roads. I heard of one instance yesterday where someone was knee-deep in water, yet someone drove through it and the water was of such a force that it ripped off the front numberplate. That just shows you that people often do not grasp the force of the water.

The weather also reminds us of the need to keep children away from floodwaters, as other ministers have mentioned. I want to thank and commend the efforts of the team at Emergency Management

Queensland, particularly Frank Pagano and Mike Shapland. I will be looking forward after question time to going to Kedron, not interfering with operational duties, but seeing them there at the State Disaster Coordination Centre.

In my own electorate a tragedy occurred yesterday to someone I know personally. Mark Bayliss was at a firm called Bayliss and Samra. Amrit Samra is a friend of mine, and I want to pass on my condolences to the family of Mark Bayliss, whom I knew, and to other staff members of his firm. He was a good person and worked in a building where many of my friends work, at 33 Elkhorn Avenue.

I want to reiterate and express the concerns we have that support events should continue beyond the acute phase, including that there be government support and that insurance companies and assessors do the right thing in the weeks and months to come once the media spotlight has passed. Once again, I would like to commend everyone for their efforts. We need to keep working hard to maintain Queensland as the great place that it is.