




Speech by

Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Hansard Tuesday, 22 March 2011

NATURAL DISASTERS, GLASS HOUSE ELECTORATE

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (9.09 pm): The events of early January 2011 already seem distant for many Queenslanders. Caught up in the daily routines of school and work, many of us who were unaffected have returned to a life-as-normal kind of existence, albeit one with constant reminders of natural disasters throughout the world. But there are families, businesses and communities in Glass House, as there are in Lockyer and Hinchinbrook, who are still suffering the after-effects of the torrential rain and flooding.

In my contribution to February's condolence motion I raised the plight of the community of Bellthorpe. The situation for Bellthorpe has not improved greatly over the past four weeks. Yes, through the constant questioning and lobbying of the community and the hard work of local councillor Adrian Raedel, it has one sealed lane open into the community. But that lane is a compromise negotiated with the geotechnical engineers and road crews. It is not a long-term solution; it is not even a short-term solution. That lane has a five-tonne load limit on it for obvious reasons: it is adjacent to a significant landslide. The problem is that, come May, local horticulturalists start harvesting their avocado crop and if these producers cannot get trucks in to remove their fruit it will rot and these local businesses will lose 12 months worth of livelihood.

I realise that the responsibility for repairing both Gap Road and Bellthorpe Range Road resides with local government—in this case Moreton Bay Regional Council. There is no denying that Councillor Raedel has been on the job. However, possibly what we are seeing in Bellthorpe is one of the very tangible repercussions of local government amalgamations: the council is so large that sometimes the smallest get missed.

I, along with the federal member for Longman, have approached Moreton Bay Mayor Allan Sutherland seeking his urgent and speedy intervention in the necessary reconstruction work. As a result, I understand that during its regular meeting the council today received a verbal update on action to date and actions required. It is my hope that, as a result of this update, the excavators will start rolling and these two vital community links are reopened as soon as possible. I have also written to Major General Mick Slater seeking whatever support he can provide to expediting the repair work.

It has also come to my attention that Main Roads may not have all the funding it needs to repair the many landslides on main roads throughout Glass House. In particular, I am concerned that the major slide on the Maleny-Kenilworth Road between Witta and Conondale will not be repaired any time soon because funds are drying up. I sincerely hope this is not the case. I again ask the Minister for Main Roads, the Premier as Minister for Reconstruction and Major General Mick Slater to do all they can to ensure funding is provided to the department of main roads so that crews are available to start work immediately and these pivotal pieces of community infrastructure are restored to full operational capacity as soon as possible.