




Speech by

Howard Hobbs

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

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WESTERN QUEENSLAND, FLOODS

 **Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—LNP) (2.42 pm): I want to bring to the attention of the House the serious situation of the irreparable flood damaged bridge over the Maranoa River at Mitchell and the need to urgently rebuild this bridge. The government needs to use the powers of the Reconstruction Authority to fast-track this essential infrastructure. Already, \$7.1 million has been allocated for an upgrade by 2014. However, under the present circumstances this must be brought forward.

The load limits that have been in place since the flood have been lifted and regulation mass vehicles and road trains can cross the bridge with a 20-kilometre speed limit. We cannot afford to have a weak link in our National Highway, in our link to Darwin. The Maranoa River is one of the fastest flowing inland rivers in Australia. While this bridge has served us well over many years, it must be replaced.

The Reconstruction Authority should also assist the Maranoa regional council to build a levy bank to protect the town of Roma. There have been three serious floods in two years, costing approximately \$100 million. A \$7 million levy to rectify this situation is good value. The Premier announced a \$10 million flood mitigation package, and some of this funding should be immediately put to use for this purpose. Negotiations with landholders and anyone impacted should be commenced as soon as possible and an action plan should be put in place for temporary mitigation. The wet season is not over. In fact, as late as yesterday a similar storm pattern that caused recent flooding formed in the Maranoa catchment. Doing nothing is not an option.

I want to also talk about the town of Amby, which was severely impacted by the flooding. People's houses were affected but it did not reach the national news. Many small towns and landholders were affected. I was talking to a landholder on the Warrego River the other day. He had just bought this particular property and he ended up losing all of his machinery and he had just under eight inches of water through his house. He had no insurance of course because you cannot get it for a business like that. They need help to be able to clean those houses, buildings and machinery that they have lost as well.