




Speech By
Curtis Pitt

MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Pease Park (Innisfail Showgrounds), Dedicated Power Supply

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (3.52 pm): An ongoing and important issue for the Innisfail community is the need for better and more reliable power supply at the showgrounds. This is not a new issue for the Pease Park Management Committee or the Innisfail and District Show Society. About 20 years ago a four-hour blackout was experienced on Show Thursday that caused a great deal of chaos. Several options have been looked at over the years. While there have been CBD power upgrades, because of the infrequent use of an increased power supply by Pease Park, more regular users are understandably allocated power. In recent years the show society has relied on hiring generators which comes at a significant cost.

Another issue is the need to upgrade show pavilions 1 and 2 so that they can be used for public purposes in the case of natural disasters. For example, a one-in-50-year flood level affects Warrina Home. Around 190 elderly or frail clients—many of who are high needs—as well as staff, in total around 300 people, would benefit from an upgrade. Nearly 80 people used the venue during Cyclone Yasi in its current form. Since that time, the Cassowary Coast Regional Council has done some costings around what it would take to retrofit cyclone rated roller doors. This will cost around \$15,000. I know Councillor Mark Nolan is pushing hard on this, not only in his local government role but also as chair of the Pease Park Management Committee, to ensure that this is included in this year's Cassowary Coast Regional Council budget. In order to ensure a dedicated power supply during such events, a 300kVA to 400kVA generator would be needed to service the building, particularly to support the clients from Warrina Home. This would also address issues facing the show society. After two major cyclones in five years and regular wet season flooding there is a strong case to be put.

It was on this basis that I wrote to the Minister for Local Government last year seeking his support for this proposal. In my letter there was no attack on the government. This is certainly not a partisan issue, simply an issue of importance to many people in Innisfail and surrounding areas. However, the response from the minister was a half-smart political swipe at both me and the former member for Mulgrave, who he suggested had not kept his commitments. It appears that the minister has based his understanding of this issue on a newspaper report in which a journalist may have over egged the former member's promise to work on this issue, which certainly did not include a funded commitment, just hard work.

In his response the minister did not address the details in my letter which included matters related to local disaster management. Not only is he the Minister for Local Government but he is also now the Minister for Community Recovery and Resilience. His political response was critical of the problem not being solved when Labor was in power. I guess we were distracted providing \$14 million in funding for the Jubilee Bridge, more than \$40 million for water and sewerage works and \$2 million to support a new library for Innisfail. I was disappointed that the minister's response was not befitting of the office that he holds. It was all about excuses rather than engaging that can-do ethos that the LNP crow about so often.

Again, this is not a political issue. I ask that the minister give proper consideration to funding for power reliability and work with me on behalf of the Innisfail community to ensure the future of the area's biggest annual event and improved local disaster management options.