




Speech By  
**Hon. David Crisafulli**

**MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA**

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**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Natural Disaster Events of 2013, Reconstruction**

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (2.20 pm): Since ex-Tropical Cyclone Oswald crossed the coast between Pormpuraaw and Kowanyama in late January, thousands of Queenslanders' lives have changed. As we speak, councils such as Western Downs are again trying to assess and report damage. So any statistical sketch will be incomplete, but there are a few incontrovertible facts. Fifty-four local government areas have been activated for disaster relief and the reconstruction task will run into the billions. The disaster activated areas span more than 800,000 square kilometres, or nearly half of the state's land area. Nearly 6,000 kilometres of road have been affected and around 20 per cent of the state controlled road network. There have been over 70,000 insurance claims lodged.

Three disaster recovery coordinators have been appointed to lead disaster recovery efforts in the affected areas of Queensland. The Queensland Reconstruction Authority will play an important role in the recovery efforts, but the major driver for recovery this time around is local know-how. Resilience starts with how communities view themselves. It is a mindset that recognises natural disasters are a way of life in Queensland and that local communities need to be smart in how they plan ahead, respond to and rebuild more effectively after each event. It is also recognition of the need for some flexibility in funding arrangements to stop the mindless practice of building like-for-like infrastructure that is destroyed every time it floods.

Negotiations continue with the federal government to widen its focus, but it is with great disappointment that I have to inform this House that a dam and roads in Western Sydney have been judged to be more urgent than the situation facing regional Queensland or, indeed, the state of the Bruce Highway. We had asked the federal government to match the \$140 million for flood security and resilience as a minimum to help the recovery. An amount of \$100 million would have been spent on betterment, or improving infrastructure, with \$40 million to go to mitigation. Combined with our funds, that would have given us \$280 million, but instead the federal government's 'big' flood announcement last week was \$57 million. Of that, \$40 million will go to betterment—and we will match that—\$7 million for Roma and \$10 million for Ipswich. One of the most disappointing facts is that the \$40 million betterment fund only applies to council assets. In many cases, the top priority in a local government might, in fact, be a state road that cuts the community off in a time of crisis.

Here are the facts: while the Gillard government pays \$50 million for the Warragamba Dam in Western Sydney and \$1 billion for the Western Sydney motorway network, they are at the same time turning away from a state that is offering to match their betterment funds dollar for dollar. In the past few days we have seen two types of sandbagging: the kind where business owners in places like Gympie and Maryborough fight to stop water lapping at their front door and the kind where a Prime Minister tries to hold back the tide about to sweep Labor out of office in a place once considered its

voter heartland. The time is right to give Queensland the help it needs to rebuild better, safer and stronger so we can face the next wet season with some peace of mind. The time is right to stop the stupidity of rebuilding in exactly the same way and somehow expecting to get a different result. The time is right to stop chasing the short-term savings only to line up a few years later to replace the same bit of infrastructure and all the community heartache that comes with that. The time is right to put shattered communities ahead of marginal seats in Sydney's west.