




Speech By
Hon. David Crisafulli

MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Natural Disaster Events of 2013, Recovery Assistance

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (10.20 am): Queensland's resilience was tested in January, when 57 of the state's 73 local government areas were impacted by floods—in some regions, up to the fifth time in two years—but it will not be the damage which communities endured that will define this Queensland tragedy. The pace and success of the state's 2013 recovery, which was made possible by the determination of its people and the new approach of this government, will be the lasting legacy. The start of that journey was the Newman government's establishment of the state's first betterment fund. This fund will help us build better, stronger infrastructure, rather than simply replace the same structures in the same positions that would be swept away again in the next flood.

We asked the federal government for \$100 million, and we matched dollar for dollar the \$40 million that we received from them. We have since wrung every drop of value out of that \$80 million to break the stupidity of rebuilding the same structure, knowing that it will be washed away again in the future. It is a scenario that has been repeated too many times throughout Queensland and it is a dumb cycle, but this government has broken it for the first time in any Australian state. We have turned the corner in this recovery—not by crying crocodile tears during the event and then disappearing, but by adopting the new approach of working with local governments. We have streamlined the heavy load of bureaucracy by putting people on the ground to address the different problems that diverse councils encounter in a state as big and diverse as Queensland.

No longer are regional communities dictated to from Brisbane; it is the long arm of Canberra that we have to worry about. The current Prime Minister says he is a Queenslander. It is time for him to put up or shut up. Queensland's flood recovery did not even rate a mention in his cabinet, and the position was taken from a minister and given to a secretary. The Prime Minister says he will look after us personally. If that is the case, where is the \$725 million owed to Queensland, Mr Rudd? After flood repairs had already been undertaken several years ago and funds allocated in the federal budget, the Labor government changed the reporting requirements of Queensland councils. The state footed the bill for those repairs in good faith, and it would be wrong of me to condemn the former government, because it did the job according to those guidelines. But the federal government has refused to pay. It is time for this Queensland Prime Minister to settle his bill with this state.

This failure should not cloud this year's recovery effort. In 2011 it took the Bundaberg Regional Council 18 months to get \$25 million worth of work out to market; this year we have seen \$40 million in four months and an additional \$30 million the following month. That is nearly three times the amount of recovery in less than a third of the time, and it has been repeated in towns across this state. The job is not finished, but we are building the foundations for a stronger, more resilient Queensland that will never be quite as vulnerable again.