



Speech by


**Mark Boothman**

**MEMBER FOR ALBERT**

Hansard Tuesday, 12 February 2013

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### **MOTION: NATURAL DISASTER EVENTS OF 2013**

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (10.47 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the Premier's flood condolence motion. The name 'Oswald' will forever be linked with 2013. The name will go down in history—a weather event that left a trail of destruction down the eastern seaboard of our great state from the tropical north to the south-east corner. The fury of Mother Nature has no equal, and Oswald is a prime example of that. The enormous physical and economic damage inflicted upon residents of the Burnett and Bundaberg regions will require all Queenslanders to support their recovery. We can show our support by purchasing products and produce from these areas and certainly by donating to the Red Cross flood appeal. I offer my condolences to all of the families and friends of those who lost loved ones. Mother Nature can certainly be kind, but she can also be extremely cruel. Our emergency services worked tirelessly to save multiple lives through their dedication and hard work. Without these individuals, the cost of life could have been much, much higher. Whilst the Albert electorate did escape widespread physical destruction, we too suffered isolation through communities being inaccessible due to rising floodwaters. Parts of the Buccan region became almost an inland island as the area was cut off from the rest of the world, apart from a very small goat track which actually provided a valuable lifeline for locals.

I wish to thank the Mayor of the Logan City Council, Pam Parker, and Councillor Don Petersen for their quick thinking in opening up this crucial link, which is the so-called goat track, named by Mayor Pam Parker, which allows emergency supplies to this area. Whilst my region suffered power outages for extended periods, the Energex workers worked extremely hard around the clock to restore power. I must add that I personally witnessed Energex workers working to exhaustion. I spoke to a team when they took a few minutes break to grab some lunch at the local BP service station at Yatala. I could not help but go up to them and pat them on the back and thank them from the bottom of my heart for all of their dedication and work. I say well done Energex. The community certainly thanks them for their tireless efforts.

The community spirit in Buccan was high, with the neighbours looking out for each other, sharing food and conducting large neighboured barbecues. Watching these individuals certainly lifted spirits. The main damage occurred just outside the Albert electorate on Mount Tamborine, where massive rainforest trees were pushed over like matchsticks. Roads were cut and the famous Mount Tamborine goat track, which links Mount Tamborine to Canungra, suffered extensive damage. The tourism industry within the Mount Tamborine region also suffered an additional blow with the closure of the John Muntz Causeway. During the flooding event the John Muntz Causeway was hit by a wall of water. I have never seen the Coomera River rise so quickly.

Members of this House may remember that in a previous speech I referred to this crucial arterial road, which links Mount Tamborine, Wongawallan and parts of Upper Coomera to the rest of the Gold Coast. I am happy to inform the House that the downstream culverts did not sustain any further damage. That is an incredible feat if you take into account the wall of water that smashed against the bridge. That is a direct reflection of the skill of the engineers and workers who strengthened the causeway after the last flooding event. RoadTek crews worked long hours preparing the bridge for single-lane traffic use and on a daily basis I went to see their handiwork and stewardship. The John Muntz Causeway is now open to

single-lane traffic, which is under traffic light control, which is certainly allowing people to access the Upper Coomera, Wongawallan and Mount Tamborine regions. I would like to take a moment to thank the members of my community for their understanding whilst the causeway was closed. Their patience was greatly appreciated. The construction of a new bridge is estimated to start in March or April this year and the new bridge is designed for better flood mitigation.

I owe a big thanks to the Cedar Creek community for their efforts to clean up the Cedar Creek State School. In one single day they managed to clean up the yards of the school and the classrooms if there was any damage to them. They did a fantastic job. I can certainly say that the Minister for Education, Training and Employment, the Hon. John-Paul Langbroek, was very impressed with the community spirit at Cedar Creek. The Principal of Cedar Creek State School, Andrew Cummings, certainly has a wonderful community at Cedar Creek who back him up.

I wish to extend a warm thanks to all the volunteers in the Rural Fire Service, the State Emergency Service and other community groups. The rural fire units and the council did a fantastic job in getting out there and making sure that the roads that needed to be closed were closed and that there was plenty of signage, which certainly ensured the safety of motorists. I will always remember the Rural Fire Service crews manning the roadblock on Howard's Creek crossing, fighting off horizontal rain backed by gale force winds. The 'road closed' signs kept on flying over, but those crews held their ground and made sure that nobody was going to cross that flooded crossing. I certainly thank all the professional emergency service workers who saved countless lives.

I would also like to thank Councillor William Owen-Jones of division 2 of the Gold Coast City Council and Councillor Donna Gates of division 1 of the Gold Coast City Council for their hard work during the crises in getting out information that was so sought after. In closing, I would like to ask people to support the local businesses in the Upper Coomera, Wongawallan and Mount Tamborine regions. They are open for business now. They desperately need coins. So I ask people in the Gold Coast region to please go up to those areas. There are lovely places to have nice coffees or to grab a nice beer. So I ask people to support their local businesses.