




Speech by

Stephen Bennett

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

Hansard Thursday, 14 February 2013

QUEENSLAND RECONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (6.20 pm): This bill expands the jurisdiction of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority to include the flooding from the tornados and the flooding from ex-Tropical Cyclone Oswald, and we will hear the word 'resilience' many times over the reconstruction period. With the introduction of the bill, having a stronger focus on disaster resilience is welcomed. Our communities need the operations of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority Act and I welcome the extension of its powers. Queensland Reconstruction Authority personnel were on the ground days after the event and the mammoth task started in earnest immediately. The signing of the national partnership agreement is welcomed and a positive sign that we can deal with the recommendations and engineering solutions for the many affected communities.

The appointment of the minister to the position of Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience is welcomed. I congratulate the minister and the cabinet on their commitment to the reconstruction efforts. The government's commitments were demonstrated by the efforts during the disaster events and the commitments to the recovery and reconstruction are an immediate priority. The improvements to the Queensland Reconstruction Authority acknowledge the serious damage caused and the need to rebuild with common sense and engineering based solutions. The appointment of Deputy Commissioner Brett Pointing to the recovery effort is a welcomed initiative for Bundaberg and North Burnett. I am comforted by the opportunities that this level of expertise will bring to my community. The relationships with local government are vital and the arrangements created under this government will see more cooperation and more value for money.

I heard the contribution of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I can tell honourable members that no matter what they heard or believe, the delays in activating assistance packages caused significant stress in my community. I note that now that access to essential funding has become available, work on major devastation has commenced in earnest. If the minister could assist with the activation of category D assistance that would be a most important item. We need the federal government's assistance.

I remind the House of the magnitude of the recovery and the frustrations that will emerge in our community over the next period. However, we have the right legislation, the right people in the right jobs and the drive and the commitment of this government to get the job done. I again thank the Premier, ministers, staff and my colleagues here in the House for their commitment and support for my community. Therefore, it is with hope and confidence that I commend the bill to the House.