



Speech By  
**Hon. David Crisafulli**


**MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA**

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**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Disaster Recovery**

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (9.47 am): When disaster strikes, the economies of local communities take a hit. How big that hit is depends on how quickly vital infrastructure like roads, bridges and water treatment plants can be repaired and put back online. The government recognised this and put in place a range of improvements to up the speed of recovery in local communities. An example of the success of these improvements is the recovery from Cyclone Oswald in Bundaberg. Flood devastated Bundaberg has recovered quickly with rebuilding roads, water infrastructure and bridges. In 2011 it took the Bundaberg Regional Council 18 months to get \$25 million worth of repair work to market. In 2013 it took four months to get \$40 million worth of work to market. This is testament to the relationship that the state and local governments now share and is in stark contrast to the centralist paternalistic recovery that Labor oversaw.

If vital roads and bridges are taken out, commerce stops. People cannot get to the shops, and even if they could there is no stock. Employees struggle to get to work, and even if they could there is no power. The longer this goes on, the greater the impact this has, particularly on small business. Communities have the double whammy of taking the hit of the initial disaster and then not being able to trade their way out of it. The key to helping communities get back on their feet is speed. Nowhere is that better demonstrated than the Bundaberg port. The restoration, dredging and repairs at the Port of Bundaberg after Oswald were undertaken and funded under the NDRRA to open the port to large export vessels. The January floods damaged the shipping channel and navigation markers, stranding 180,000 tonnes of the previous season's sugar crush in storage.

The speedy restoration of the port's infrastructure meant that that region was open for business in time for the 2013 season. Queensland Sugar Ltd thanked the state and federal governments for ensuring that the Bundaberg port was brought back to full operation and for the urgency with which the work was undertaken.

However, it is not just recovery that is important to the economy. Business and communities need to have confidence that sensible decisions are made. What business is going to set up operations in a community where the infrastructure is constantly destroyed and built back the same way? That is why we instigated the Betterment Fund, to give confidence to business that they can reinvest in recovering communities. A classic example is the Gayndah water intake project, which was the first betterment project approved. It was rebuilt but then, just as works were finished, it was destroyed in 2013. The Gayndah water intake betterment project saw the construction of a new raw water main to the water treatment plant, a new submersible-style pumping station and a water intake upstream of the Claude Wharton Weir. The water supply intake on the Burnett River provides the

town's only water supply and supports a population of approximately 2,000, as well as local primary industries. Making that piece of infrastructure more flood resilient will help secure Gayndah's water supply and improve the efficiency and reliability of that important piece of community infrastructure in the case of extreme weather.

One thing the government has really taken hold of is the importance of mitigation. One of the big killers of local economies is the ability of business to access or afford insurance. We have embarked on the biggest disaster mitigation program seen in the state for some time and it has delivered results. This week is Get Ready Week and we are encouraging business to use this time to put in place some contingency plans to make sure they can continue to trade in the aftermath of a disaster. The business community, large or small, can look at the performance of the government and have confidence that everything is being done to lower the risk to their business and give them the best conditions to increase their investment in local communities.