




Speech By
Hon. David Crisafulli

MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA

Record of Proceedings, 26 November 2014

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Natural Disaster Preparedness

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (2.22 pm): People have heard me say in this House that it is not a matter of if another natural disaster strikes Queensland; it is a matter of when. It is no good sticking your head in the sand hoping it does not happen, as governments have done for too long. We have taken a different approach, starting in 2013 when ex-Tropical Cyclone Oswald wreaked havoc across the Central Queensland coast. Instead of barking orders from George Street at communities decimated by floods and cyclones, we had staff from the Queensland Reconstruction Authority on the front line in the midst of the disaster. This government has shifted the focus of the QRA, getting staff out from behind desks and assessing damage sustained to our essential public infrastructure. This change of focus means things happen quicker, and time is of the essence when Mother Nature strikes.

Getting things done quickly is important not only as the disaster unfolds but also when the recovery work kicks into gear. A quick rebuild means Queenslanders can get life back to normal a lot sooner. There is no finer example of what can be achieved when people are on the ground than what we saw in Bundaberg where twice the amount of work went out to market in a quarter of the time when comparing the 2011 and 2013 events. To give members some idea of the work carried out across 2013-14, the QRA undertook nearly 4,000 site observations with over 50,000 photographs taken and logged of flood and cyclone affected assets. This included more than 1,200 kilometres of roads, 400 culverts, 150 drainage segments and 130 floodways. This morning I was in Bundaberg with Mayor Forman to open the old Midtown Marina site on the banks of the Burnett River. It really was a watershed moment in the Bundaberg recovery: it was the site of the sink hole—that defining image—which marked ground zero in the floods. Although the memories are still fresh, the wounds are beginning to heal. It is here I give credit to the member for Bundaberg and indeed the member for Burnett who have been dogged to ensure some good comes out of the city's run of heartache. This project is an example of this and will be a legacy of rebuilding better.

The Far North also copped a shellacking earlier this year after Cyclone Ita crossed the coast. The speed of both recoveries is unprecedented. Building things back better is common sense, but it has not always been this way, which is why we stood up to Canberra and brokered the \$80 million Betterment Fund to end the madness of replacing like for like. The rebuild of the Gayndah-Mundubbera Road is just one of over 200 betterment projects which have received funding to make public assets more resilient. It is a road which has been repeatedly damaged in consecutive floods and it has now been built back to a better standard. The road is a critical primary industry supply route which is used to transport cattle and citrus to industries imperative to the North Burnett. In 2011 and 2013 the same two kilometres was washed out when the water tore through. When the road got washed away, the produce could not get to market. The flow-on effects for the local economy were long lasting and far reaching, but we worked closely with Mayor Don Waugh and the member for

Callide to put an end to this mess. The road was relocated uphill 11 metres, with one kilometre of new concrete and 900 metres of new asphalt. The project was funded to the tune of \$8.8 million, including \$2 million from the Betterment Fund. The work this government has done in building mitigation infrastructure and working with councils across the state is a testament to the relationship we share. With front-line staff on hand, by building back better and by looking for ways to protect our communities, the Newman government has fundamentally changed the way Queenslanders recover from natural disasters.