




Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Grantham Floods, Commission of Inquiry

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.58 am): January 10, 2011 is a day tragically etched in the memories of all Queenslanders—perhaps none more so than the people of Grantham at the foot of the Toowoomba range. It was on that day that 12 of the townsfolk were killed. Many homes were washed from their foundations and 50 families left with only the clothes they were wearing when a shattering wall of water swept through the town with little warning. The images of this torrent were beamed around the world giving the international community a true picture of the sheer force of 2011's extreme rain event. They are images that will never be forgotten. For all Queenslanders and for the people who remained and rebuilt in Grantham, the terrifying flood has been extremely difficult to overcome. Although there will probably never be complete closure for the families who lived through this tragedy, today I am announcing a new commission of inquiry into the flooding of the Lockyer Creek between Helidon and Grantham on that fateful day.

A DHI consultant report into the Grantham tragedy published by the *Australian* has suggested several inconsistencies. The report has found that a section of embankment that collapsed at the Grantham quarry was 260 metres long, not 55 metres as initially reported by the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry. The DHI report has found there were also multiple breaches of the quarry wall rather than just a single breach. Grantham residents have come forward supporting the findings of the DHI report. The people of Grantham want the truth and that is why today my government is launching this commission of inquiry.

It is proposed that the commission will begin gathering evidence next week, on 11 May. The commission will be chaired by respected QC Walter Sofronoff and will end on 31 August, allowing independent hydrological modelling to be undertaken. It is proposed that the consultation phase of the inquiry will be limited to about two weeks, but I stress that this inquiry will be independent.

There are five key terms of reference for the inquiry. It will focus on the impacts of man-made and natural features of the landscape which could have altered or contributed to the flooding, whether the existence or breach of the Grantham quarry caused or contributed to the flooding, whether the quarry had a material impact on the damage caused, whether the breach of the quarry had implications for the evacuation of the town, and how these matters were initially investigated and how eyewitness accounts were dealt with in the aftermath. There will likely be a call for public submissions, and those who will provide eyewitness accounts other than the Grantham residents will include police officers, fire and emergency staff and possibly the former owners of the quarry.

Residents of Grantham and their mayor, Steve Jones, have been calling for this inquiry and we have been listening. They are determined that the deaths of their friends, neighbours and family members on that day will not have been in vain. The people of Grantham have suffered through an horrific, terrifying, fatal event. They deserve and require further closure. They want the truth to prevail. They want to move on with their lives in the wake of one of the most appalling natural disasters in Queensland's modern history, and my government is determined to help them achieve that.