



Speech By  
**Andrew Powell**


**MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE**

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## ADJOURNMENT

### Glass House Electorate, Disaster Declarations

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (1.42 am): I rise to present the frustrations and disappointments of constituents of the Glass House electorate regarding the inconsistent application of disaster declarations, especially when it comes to primary producers. There is no question that Queensland has borne the brunt of the full array of disasters over the past decade—tropical cyclones like Yasi, Oswald and Marcia, just to name a few; floods across the entire state, in the west, in Bundaberg and in Brisbane; drought, especially the ongoing challenges in the west; and severe storms, especially in South-East Queensland.

I do not for a minute want to take away from the devastation wreaked on so many Queenslanders, nor bemoan the support that they rightly received, but on three occasions farmers in the Glass House electorate have missed out: after ex-Tropical Cyclone Marcia in February 2015, after the staggering storm cells that led to four deaths in my electorate in May 2015, and after another storm cell in November 2015. In each instance disaster declarations were made across parts of the state but not in the Glass House electorate and certainly not in the parts that needed it the most.

I have here stories from Peter Young of Glass House Mountains, Elizabeth Noble of Beerwah, Brad Ward of Peachester, Wayne Stewart of Peachester and Susan Fay of Wamuran. Each of those stories is indicative of the pain, suffering and financial loss that they have borne. I will read part of Susan Fay's story from November 2015. It states—

I heard on the news last evening that a disaster relief assist package had been set up for the Fernvale area following—  
the November storm—

Little known or reported is how badly it hit our little small holding in Wamuran Basin, our current only source of income. We had damage to every fenced paddock, internal and boundary. 1,000 trees down or causing a serious danger to us and livestock.

Our neighbours, substantial fruit growers and exporters also doing it tough due to ill health have substantial damage to fruit nets and fallen debris.

Thankfully, we were able to get some assistance thru our insurance company with fence repair and securing the farm but we need assistance with the remaining danger posed by the fallen and damaged trees making larger areas of the farm inaccessible.

Are we entitled to claim the offered \$1,000 per household, which would make a small contribution towards hiring heavy duty machinery to clear the damaged and fallen trees ...

Unfortunately, the answer to Susan was no. More frustratingly, what ensued was classic government buck-passing. I wrote to the state minister. He blamed the federal government. The federal government then blamed the local government and the local government blamed the state and federal governments.

I know that the ministers for communities and agriculture recently announced a new one-stop shop for primary producers confronted by natural disasters, [www.farmerdisastersupport.org.au](http://www.farmerdisastersupport.org.au). Although that is certainly welcome—and I will be promoting it—as a government we must resolve the disaster declaration process inconsistencies. We cannot blame each other. We need to do more, because Queenslanders expect more. We must simplify, strengthen and more consistently apply disaster declarations so that people like those in the Glass House electorate do not fall through the cracks again in the future.