




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Tropical Cyclone Marcia

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (12.14 pm): This Saturday, 20 February, marks 12 months since category 5 Tropical Cyclone Marcia barrelled down Central Queensland. As I travelled around the electorate in Marcia's aftermath 12 months ago, I could see it was going to be a tough and long road ahead to rebuild. The destruction inflicted by the cyclone not only tore homes apart, it turned lives upside down. But I know from talking to people across the region that one thing is for certain: Marcia did not destroy our fighting Central Queensland spirit.

The Palaszczuk government responded swiftly to ensure those most in need had immediate assistance. The Premier promised to be behind Central Queensland every step of the way in the recovery and the Palaszczuk government did just that. The Premier and her government recognised the importance of kickstarting the local economy by investing in critical infrastructure and supporting local businesses. We worked side by side with local councils to make sure the reconstruction effort helped make Central Queensland stronger and more resilient than ever before. Livingstone, Rockhampton and Banana councils identified important infrastructure projects that would assist in their recovery and the Palaszczuk government subsequently sought support from the federal government for joint category D funding under the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements. The Abbott government, however, only approved \$27.75 million of the \$198.5 million requested funding for these important infrastructure projects because 'Tropical Cyclone Marcia was not of an exceptional nature compared to Tropical Cyclone Oswald or Tropical Cyclone Yasi'. I think the people of Rockhampton and Yeppoon would disagree. Severe Tropical Cyclone Marcia was certainly of an exceptional nature to us.

The Palaszczuk government promised not to abandon our community and in July we announced \$40 million worth of funding towards the Yeppoon foreshore revitalisation project and the Rockhampton riverbank project. These announcements represent the largest funding announcement for Rockhampton and Yeppoon by a state government in many years. These projects will help our community bridge the gap between the emergency response and the return to normality, building back not just our homes and our community but Central Queensland's confidence and giving us the resilience we need to move on with our lives. These projects are designed to improve infrastructure in the region and help the community and local economy recover in the short and long term by providing social, tourism, events and recreational infrastructure to the region. These projects will be a catalyst for the staging of new and larger scale events and festivals generating significant economic benefits and will provide private investment in the area.

In October 2015 sporting clubs and associations in Keppel shared in more than \$240,000 worth of funding from the Palaszczuk government's Sport and Recreation Disaster Recovery Program. The Emu Park Golf Club, the Yeppoon AFL Club, the Yeppoon Rugby League Club, the Yeppoon Golf Club,

the Sporting Shooters Association, the Cooe Bay Progress and Sports Association, the Yeppoon Hack and Pony Club, the Rockhampton Pistol Club and the Rockhampton Horse Riding for the Disabled Association all received funding to repair and rebuild their club facilities. Additionally, almost \$1 million was awarded by the state government to over 150 local sporting and recreational clubs affected by Marcia and in December I welcomed \$3 million in joint federal and state funding to help restore our beautiful Kershaw Gardens back to its former glory, \$2 million to repair the Scenic Highway at Statue Bay and \$4.9 million to repair Pilbeam Drive, Dean Street, Capricorn Street, Elphinstone Street and the Glenmore Water Treatment Plant.

Thank you to everyone who played a role in the recovery after Marcia. In particular, I thank the Ergon and Energex workers from around the state who worked tirelessly to restore power to our region in record time, our emergency services—the police, fireys, paramedics, doctors, nurses and allied health professionals—who worked around the clock, the SES and rural fire brigades from around the region and the state, both Rockhampton and Livingstone councils, including mayors Strelow and Ludwig, deputy mayors Williams and Scott and all of the council staff and the local disaster management groups.

I thank the Palaszczuk government, the Premier and her ministers who visited the region multiple times after the cyclone. Thank you to you and all of your staff for your assistance and urgent attention given to matters when I raised them with you. I look forward to welcoming the Premier to Keppel this Saturday to join in the commemorative services being organised by Rockhampton and Livingstone councils. Thank you also to His Excellency the Honourable Paul de Jersey, the Governor, for his support and thank you to the local people who went out and helped their neighbours, the elderly and the disabled. There are many beautiful anecdotes of generosity, caring for each other and lending a hand. From here it is onwards and upwards for Central Queensland. We will never forget the damage and pain caused by Cyclone Marcia but I know that we will grow as a stronger community, a brighter more united community, than ever before.