




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

Record of Proceedings, 10 May 2016

MOTION: NATURAL DISASTER RELIEF AND RECOVERY ARRANGEMENTS

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.35 pm): I rise in the House to oppose the motion. I listened to the Deputy Premier's speech and I agree with one thing she said, and that is in relation to the seriousness of disasters that affect Queensland. Our state is a big state. I called it ginormous the other day. We do have a ginormous state. This is the reason we need to treat the issue of disaster management very seriously, as everyone in the House always does. There are members from all over the state in different electorates who have faced natural disasters such as the member for Hinchinbrook and the member for Rockhampton. Last year I travelled around his electorate and saw some of the areas affected by the natural disaster that occurred there.

Any claims that recovery funding has been ripped away from Queensland are completely untrue. The funds are clearly identified in the forward estimates. There is no suggestion that the federal coalition government will not be providing the Queensland government the money it is owed. This is an extremely serious matter. The Productivity Commission report into natural disaster funding found that the current funding arrangements are not efficient, equitable or sustainable. They are prone to cost shifting, ad hoc responses and short-term political opportunism.

The federal government has a plan to deliver the necessary funding over the next two financial years to ensure that all claims are eligible. This will ensure that this funding is going where it is needed most—to places which I just mentioned such as Keppel and the areas that suffered from last year's disaster. This is an appropriate and considered plan considering that the Queensland Audit Office has previously found that under the former federal Labor government over \$115 million of funding was spent on claims that were not eligible for funding.

The former federal Labor government's flawed disaster framework saw funding wrongfully played out between 2009 and 2012. Both the Productivity Commission and the Australian National Audit Office have released reports that are critical of the former Labor government, highlighting issues where wrongful claims were made. This is funding that could have been spent on eligible reconstruction works or mitigation works to assist with future proofing Queensland—just like the betterment projects that we saw under the previous LNP government. All across the state there were betterment projects undertaken on roads, bridges and waterways so that when the next disaster occurs—and, unfortunately, the next disaster will happen; let us hope not soon—those roads, bridges and waterways do not need the same amount of money spent on them as they did last time.

The federal government has a plan that is fully costed and funded and that will fix Labor's flawed framework that saw all those wrongful claims paid out. The motion moved by the Deputy Premier appears to give absolutely no consideration to the importance of mitigation works to limit the severity of those natural disasters. The finding of both the Productivity Commission and the Australian National Audit Office have made it clear that change is needed to ensure the right balance between mitigation funding and recovery funding.

Mitigation funding will ensure that Queensland as one of Australia's most disaster-prone states is able to address our greatest risks. The changes proposed by the federal government are about working in consultation with Queensland to find a way to support mitigation works and recovery works. It will see up-front mitigation funding that will reduce red tape at all levels of government and ensure that states have more autonomy to recover from those disasters in the best way that meets the needs of affected communities.

Again, I would like to reiterate that it is wrong for the Deputy Premier to stand in this House and say that about the federal government when it is just a matter of the Treasurer, who is about to speak, actually drafting his budget correctly.

(Time expired)