




Speech By
Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Record of Proceedings, 10 August 2017

MOTION

Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (4.37 pm): I rise to address the motion moved by the Deputy Premier with regard to the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements. The NDRRA is a safety net—a safety net to help communities recover from natural disasters. Over the past decade there has been more than \$8½ billion of NDRRA funding going to the state of Queensland. Of any state we should know what needs to be done to get the funding and get the repairs done, but let us be up-front about Labor's track record when it comes to NDRRA funding. Under its watch Labor mishandled claims, leaving Queensland out of pocket \$800 million. Do not take my word for it. Do not take the LNP's word for it. Do not take Canberra's word for it. Take the word of the Auditor-General—the independent Auditor-General—who levelled a scathing assessment of Queensland's claims under the former Labor government, including that \$153 million of the claim was for ineligible projects.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Deputy Premier, you have had a chance. Whilst I am speaking, member for Logan, you were warned this morning. The slate is clean, but I will certainly have no hesitation in giving you another warning if you persist with your interjections.

Mr POWELL: I reiterate: Queensland's own independent Auditor-General said that. These projects were signed off by departments under Labor. Claims were being made for projects without documents backing up a like-for-like replacement. After years of wrangling and trying to sort out this mess, over \$150 million worth of works continued to be ineligible because of the bogus claims of those opposite. It took Tim Nicholls to negotiate with the federal Labor government to sort this mess out.

A government member: Rubbish!

Mr POWELL: It did. And to streamline the NDRRA framework and to begin including betterment works in the recovery funding—something, despite two decades of government, those opposite could not achieve. That national partnership agreement facilitated Queensland's recovery from ex-Tropical Cyclone Oswald and the January 2013 floods. That is what working constructively with a federal government looks like. A framework for improvement was developed as part of the agreement to ensure flood prone public infrastructure was rebuilt not only to the same standard but also to a higher standard. That makes communities more resilient.

Do not let this debate distract Queenslanders from the Palaszczuk Labor government's failures. For starters, the Palaszczuk Labor government had failed to deliver the infrastructure not only that Queensland needs now but also that they promised at the last election. They are now looking for someone to blame. What is more, Labor axed the LNP's Royalties for the Regions funds that built numerous flood mitigation projects and built more resilient infrastructure.

I will list just a few. The Balonne Shire Council received \$900,000 in R4R funding for the St George flood mitigation levee; Maranoa Regional Council received \$5 million for the Roma flood mitigation project; Bundaberg Regional Council received in the order of \$2 million for the Burnett River bank stabilisation and Technology Park flood protection levee; flood mitigation works in the Burdekin shire to the tune of \$1.68 million; Diamantina picked up \$400,000; Gympie Regional Council received \$2.2 million; Isaac Regional Council received \$262,000 for its Douglas Creek floodway upgrade project; the Lockyer Valley Regional Council received multiple R4R funding for its Laidley township flood mitigation project; Mackay Regional Council received \$342,000 for the North Mackay levee system; Toowoomba Regional Council received \$1.8 million—and the list goes on and on and on.

The Palaszczuk Labor government has ripped that funding out of regional Queensland. What is more, it has discontinued the LNP's betterment fund, a dedicated fund to improve resilience in a natural disaster-prone state. Because of that action Queenslanders are now looking for the infrastructure they deserve. They know they will not get it under this Palaszczuk Labor government.