




Speech By  
**Andrew Powell**

**MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE**

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**MOTION: NATURAL DISASTERS, RECOVERY ASSISTANCE**

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (5.32 pm): At the outset, I continue to pay my respects to those residents, business owners and operators from across the Whitsunday, Mackay, Isaac and Rockhampton council areas, as well as those from all of the council areas along the eastern seaboard down to the Gold Coast and the Scenic Rim so devastatingly affected by Tropical Cyclone Debbie. Do you know what? They deserve so much better than the squabbling and the political games of the Deputy Premier.

Tonight the LNP is opposing the motion, because it is inherently false and it is wrong. I will step through just why. From the outset, just because the LNP members in this House do not posture the way that the Deputy Premier does, it does not mean that they are not representing their communities. On any day I will pit the member for Whitsunday and the member for Burdekin against the Deputy Premier in representing their communities, and they do that alongside federal members such as George Christensen. Because of that, they increased the federal contribution to \$48 million. Any suggestion that they did not is inherently wrong.

As for calling on the federal government to invest in projects—and I will come to the specific projects in a moment—I go back to the actual guidelines for what NDRRA category D stands for. The guidelines state—

**Category D:** Exceptional circumstances assistance beyond Categories A to C. Category D assistance is generally considered once the impact of the disaster has been assessed and specific recovery gaps identified. Category D assistance is requested from the states and requires agreement from the Prime Minister.

It goes on to state that category D is for—

Assistance to alleviate distress or damage in circumstances that are considered exceptional.

I repeat: in circumstances that are considered exceptional, it is to alleviate distress or damage. Let us bear that in mind while we consider the projects that the Deputy Premier has listed in the motion.

The Rockhampton levee bank: if the Labor Party had done what the LNP government had done and continued to invest in two programs, the Royalties for the Regions and the LNP's Betterment Fund, the Rockhampton levee could have been built. Last time we had this debate, I listed project after project after project that were funded through Royalties for the Regions and that are now protecting communities across this state, whether that be in St George, Roma, Burnett or the Burdekin. All of those places have received funding through Royalties for the Regions to build things like the Rockhampton levee bank.

I turn to the Whitsunday Airport. I will take advice from the member for Whitsunday, but I think they have called it the wrong thing. Are they investing in the Whitsunday Airport at Airlie Beach or are they asking for investment into the Whitsunday Coast Airport, just south of Proserpine? On 13 June, the government said that project was fully funded and that the \$40 million upgrade is occurring. If I recall correctly, the airport was so damaged that it was actually able to open the next day and they started ferrying people in. Again, I refer back to what category D funding is actually for.

We also have the Queens Park redevelopment. My understanding is that it was so devastatingly damaged that they were able to hold a food and wine festival there. As reported in the *Daily Mercury*, the event was staged and the day was an outstanding success.

Let us be clear: this is nothing more than political posturing by the Deputy Premier to cover up her inability to deliver for regional communities around the state of Queensland. It is disgraceful that the Palaszczuk government has once again raised the hopes of local councils that are already doing it tough. Labor has struggled with the NDRRA process. They failed to fund Royalties for the Regions. They have failed to fund the LNP's Betterment Fund. If they had, they would not need to go, cap in hand, to the federal government.