



Speech By  
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**MEMBER FOR KEPPEL**

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## **MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

### **Ice; Tropical Cyclone Debbie**

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (12.23 pm): Ice is a cheap, potent and easy to access drug that is a national scourge. Within homes and families, ice is having a huge impact. We now know that one in three children who required out-of-home care in Queensland last year came from a home with at least one parent addicted to ice.

Two weeks ago the Palaszczuk government gathered more than 150 health experts, drug and alcohol service providers, law enforcement officials, community representatives and affected families in Rockhampton to marshal an action plan to confront the insidious and devastating drug ice. If we are going to combat this menace, we need to have everyone involved and working with each other.

In consultation with the experts, the front-line service providers and the wider community, we have developed a draft plan of 65 actions to target the use and reduce the harm caused by crystal methamphetamine. If we are going to combat this menace we certainly need to have everyone involved. That is what the whole purpose of the ice summit in Rockhampton was about.

Too often our front-line staff and our first responders are having to cope with more violence and aggression as a consequence of the drug. The Palaszczuk government will be increasing security measures for those front-line staff in our hospitals so that our first responders, who too often encounter the chaotic and violent behaviour of ice addicts, will be protected.

In addition to the summit, a forum was hosted with almost 40 people with that lived experience of ice either personally or within their own families. The Premier told the summit that, in order to minimise harm, the government has allocated an extra \$43 million over the next five years to increase access to specialist clinics and other support services. The Premier announced that we will be investing these funds across the full spectrum, including community based counselling, non-residential rehabilitation, pre and post treatment supports such as withdrawal management in residential rehabilitation, specialist peer support for families and flexible modes for counselling. This investment is in addition to measures within our health system, including treatment and outreach services for Cooktown in the Far North and the Gold Coast on our southern border, as well as in Charleville, Cunnamulla and Rockhampton.

The Premier also told the summit that in order to reduce demand, by getting more people off ice, a separate \$6 million investment will bolster drug intervention teams and that we will increase the number of specialist clinicians in hospitals. We know that often ice addicted people have health issues related to ice but not directly caused by the drug. This can bring them, but not necessarily their ice addiction, to the attention of the health system. By training staff in emergency departments to identify people who may be on ice, we can make sure that ice addicts are receiving the correct treatment. We are also supporting statewide workforce education, training and support activities.

The Premier said that in order to reduce supply the government has implemented tough new laws which increase the maximum jail term for drug trafficking from 20 to 25 years. We are also implementing a specialist drug court to appropriately handle ice related offences. These measures, when taken together, are far more than just throwing the book at drug dealers. This government has a tough line on drug dealers but, importantly, we are also looking at stopping people getting addicted to ice in the first place. I would like to make special mention of Debbie Ware and the team at Ice Affecting Families Capricorn Coast, Icesup. Together these women are effecting change in government policy and funding.

Severe Tropical Cyclone Debbie and the subsequent widespread flooding has had a devastating impact across our state. In the days after Debbie made landfall, heavy rain and damaging wind gusts affected Central Queensland. Yeppoon recorded wind gusts of up to 120 kilometres an hour overnight. The region received hundreds of millimetres of rain. Buses were cancelled, roads were closed and thousands of homes were without power. A week after Debbie made landfall Rockhampton residents were told to prepare for the city's worst flood since 1954, with the Fitzroy River predicted to peak at 9.4 metres. The flood peaked at 8.9 metres on Friday, 7 April, and hundreds of homes had water over their floorboards.

The response in the aftermath of Debbie and also the Fitzroy River flood was swift thanks to the hard work of hundreds of selfless Central Queenslanders—our emergency service workers, SES, rural fireies, coast guard, public servants, energy, road and rail staff, local council staff and members of the Australian Defence Force. In fact, many of our local volunteers had only just returned from assisting in the aftermath of Cyclone Debbie in the Mackay-Whitsunday region when the Fitzroy River flood peaked a week later, but that did not stop them from getting stuck in to assisting in the recovery.

It may be an oxymoron, but the 2017 Fitzroy River flood was a good flood. If we can take the excellent collaboration and coordination between government agencies and engagement with the community that occurred in the preparation for and recovery from the Fitzroy River flood, if we can replicate our strong community response and recovery to natural disaster and apply it to the battle against ice in our community then we will succeed.