




Speech By
Julianne Gilbert

MEMBER FOR MACKAY

Record of Proceedings, 11 May 2017

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Welch, Ms E; Mackay Electorate, Tropical Cyclone Debbie

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (3.21 pm): I start by sending my best wishes to Eileen Welch, a resident of Mackay, for her recent 105th birthday. Eileen is a very spritely and active woman and she is one of Queensland's true treasures. Happy birthday, Eileen!

The eye of Tropical Cyclone Debbie crossed the coast just north of my electorate in the Whitsundays. Mackay was in the band of gale-force winds on Monday night and all through Tuesday. As members have all heard, the cyclone gave us an additional belting as it moved south and west to us as a severe tropical storm and dropped torrential rain, causing severe flash flooding on Wednesday afternoon and throughout Wednesday evening. The regions to the south and west of Mackay were smashed by this flash flooding. I want to place on record my sincere thanks to the Mackay Local Disaster Management Group under the leadership of chairperson, Mayor Greg Williamson. Under the leadership of this group, the Mackay region was ready to respond to the disaster as it unfolded. Although there was severe damage to property and agriculture throughout the region, there were no lives lost.

The Palaszczuk government readied the region for a swift response to make repairs after the cyclone. It brought in teams of builders and electrical workers before the cyclone so that they were ready to respond as soon as the weather was safe. In fact, there were over 400 electrical workers brought into the region from across the state and northern New South Wales. This cyclone brought out a lot of heroes and genuine good people. One of them was an Energex worker. Mick chose to stay in Mackay and assist with the cyclone response, even when his home in Gympie came under threat from the floodwaters that were dumped on the south-east corner by Debbie. There were nurses and doctors working at the Mackay Base Hospital who, without being asked, packed up clothes for a couple of days in case the hospital would be cut off by flooding after the cyclone, and indeed this was the case. The staff at the hospital readied and prepared meals and kept the laundry going, even if that was not their normal job.

Category D is much needed for our communities to get infrastructure and the environment repaired. The Premier has written to the Prime Minister seeking a \$250 million package with a fifty-fifty split. I call on the member for Dawson to stand up for Mackay and the surrounding region in Canberra to get this funding approved. The Premier and the ministers who have visited the region know we desperately need this money and we look forward to having it approved.

(Time expired)