




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR LOGAN

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Logan, Volunteers

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (12.03 pm): Logan loves its volunteers. Logan has more needs than some other communities. The Logan community steps up to meet those needs by doing more for others. Sometimes those doing the giving have so little but give so much. On Saturday, the Premier, Anastacia Palaszczuk, was at the Logan Metro Sports Centre in my electorate of Logan to say thanks and to recognise the Logan volunteers at the Logan City Council's Logan Loves Volunteers breakfast. In 2017 the greatest support for Logan was those volunteers who made a difference during the floods. The SES and rural fire brigades from all over SEQ made a tremendous difference in keeping Logan residents safe. We should also recognise the professionals, the police and fire men and women who did amazing things.

All our volunteers are heroes, but we should especially recognise three SES volunteers: Jim Ferguson, Chris Holloway and Claire Browning. They took the lead on the night of the flood of the Albert River when the SES had calls from neighbours that resident Helen Gallo was trapped on her roof with her two children and their grandfather. In the pitch black, Jim, Chris and Claire unloaded the SES boat and used all their knowledge and training to prepare to rescue the family. 'The river was fierce. It was roaring. The noise, the volume of water was just massive', remembered Claire. They navigated carefully through the fast-flowing waters, all the time trying to navigate around trees and other objects now underwater. The team did not panic as their engine cut out in the middle of the raging waters. They tied up to a tree, untangled the hose from their propeller and restarted the engine. 'When we got closer we could definitely hear the screams for help', Claire said. 'It was emotional. You're trying to scream back, "We're on our way. We're trying."' Helen Gallo had meanwhile clambered onto the roof, putting her feet in the gutters to hold the children further up the steep roof.

Jim and the team carefully came up to the house's balcony. They first passed the children over the balcony down to the boat before the dogs and lastly the grandfather, who insisted that the dogs go first. Ten anxious minutes later they were on dry land, close enough to hear their house tear off its footings and float away, crashing through trees. Of the experience of saving the family Jim Ferguson said, 'It's nice to be recognised but the recognition is for the SES in general, not just for the three of us.' All the volunteers who kept Logan safe are heroes.

After the flood a new group of heroes stepped in. Neighbours helped neighbours, mates helped mates and strangers helped strangers. So many Queenslanders answered the call, gathering each morning at the Logan Metro Sports Centre to get on the buses to help in the clean-up. The mud army was incredible, taking on the tough task of clearing and sorting. The Greenbank scouts gathered to help out Sam and Shane, a scout family. The Premier met them both in North MacLean, taking the time to hear their story. The Flagstone community set up a water taxi service across Flagstone Creek, keeping their community connected.

I want to thank local businesses, such as the Beenleigh Mitre 10 and the Maguire family of the Logan Village pub, who are organising a flood support concert. I recognise that local farms are suffering with crop losses and are gathering to help each other. Special recognition also should be given to the Ahmadiyya Muslim community of South MacLean, who are mostly Pakistani immigrants who want to give so much back to Australia. They organised teams and were simply everywhere. I came across one house in North MacLean that had been overlooked. I made a call to the community and within a few hours they had volunteers on the ground cleaning their house. At that house the water had come up to the eaves. Lynda O'Hello, who is elderly and in a wheelchair, thanked me for coming. She asked me if I had seen lots of houses like hers. I said I had. 'It must be very difficult for you,' she said. I had to pause because I was overcome a little bit with emotion. Here was a woman in the worst time of her life whose first instinct was to think of others. 'That's just what she's like,' her son said. These are special people in extraordinary situations. Volunteers who stepped up to help are special people too. Logan loves its volunteers and I hope this House recognises and loves all of those fantastic Logan volunteers.