



Speech By  
**Hon. Shannon Fentiman**


**MEMBER FOR WATERFORD**

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Record of Proceedings, 9 May 2017

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

### **Tropical Cyclone Debbie, Recovery**

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (10.32 am): Tropical Cyclone Debbie hit many Queensland families hard from North Queensland to the Gold Coast, including in my own community at Logan. I am proud to say the Palaszczuk government was there to help people get back on their feet in record time. We have supported more than 114,000 Queenslanders with hardship assistance grants totalling more than \$26 million. We were able to do this only because the Palaszczuk government took the lessons learnt from previous disasters and invested in new systems to make it even easier for people who need a helping hand.

This was the first community recovery response where Queenslanders could access financial support over the phone and online through our new community recovery portal. The results speak for themselves. Payments of hardship grants were made at a rate 7½ times faster when compared to what happened following past natural disasters such as tropical cyclones Marcia or Yasi. As an example, on day 3 we had distributed \$4.4 million in hardship grants, compared to the same time after Tropical Cyclone Marcia when we had managed to distribute only \$87,000. Importantly, this means that staff at our recovery centres could focus on outreach and support, rather than filling out paperwork. Our dedicated community recovery teams made more than 9,700 visits to people in their homes and communities to provide assistance face to face.

None of that community recovery effort could have been possible without our ready reservists: more than 780 public servants volunteered to go to disaster affected regions and lend a hand. For the first time, 142 public servants from other states and territories headed north to assist Queensland families. That support was matched by ordinary Queenslanders, who have donated more than \$196,000 and 22,800 items for impacted communities through Givit. The impact and scale of Tropical Cyclone Debbie means the need for support is ongoing. We still have outreach teams in the field and our call centre continues to follow up with individuals and families who need help. We will continue to work with communities and families impacted by the cyclone and the flooding that followed for as long as it takes to help get them back on their feet and into their homes.