




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BUDERIM

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**STATE DEVELOPMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES AND AGRICULTURAL
INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (3.03 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on this motion to take note of the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee report on the Auditor-General's report in relation to the flood resilience of river catchments. The impact of flooding on communities across South-East Queensland and Queensland more broadly remains fresh in people's memories. It is right that important work, such as reducing the impact of floods on communities, is at the forefront of government action. The average financial loss experienced from flooding was \$377 million per year across Australia and Queensland properties make up 35 per cent of all Australian properties at risk of flooding. Put simply, Queenslanders are more prone to get flooded and, when they have been flooded, the financial impact has been significant. Any steps that we can take to mitigate such an impact need to be pursued.

I experienced firsthand the dreadful impact of flooding when I led some of the first soldiers in and around Grantham in the aftermath of the devastating 2011 floods. I will forever remember the all-pervading stench of death and destruction that was wrought on a small town that was ill-prepared to deal with it. I will never forget the sense of great sadness in searching for toddlers and their grandmothers and the memories of families' lives turned upside down in a moment owing to a devastating torrent of water that tore apart a community.

Knowing the impact that such an event has on a community, I find it astounding that a local council would fail to respond to the Auditor-General's inquiries in relation to the effectiveness of flood resilience activities in river catchments that directly affect their community. That is exactly what occurred in the case of the Ipswich City Council, which failed to respond when asked for feedback from the Auditor-General. It is little wonder that such an incompetent and bumbling council needed to be removed. I only wish it had occurred sooner.

I note the Auditor-General's recommendation that flood resilience activities should be coordinated at a state and catchment level. I support the establishment of a catchment management authority as that best addresses the cross-jurisdictional issues that sometimes arise. I support the notion that we need to remain flexible enough to employ approaches that work best, considering local conditions, but it is also important that resources are applied to best effect for the good of the entire catchment, not just a single local government area. In that regard, I note the work of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority and the significant progress that has been achieved, but more needs to be done.

I note the evidence received by the committee in relation to warning systems and flood monitoring. It is clear that more needs to be done to modernise our approach. There is still a requirement to manually read gauges to establish water levels. This is unacceptable. Similarly, my experience in places such as Grantham tells me that we need to employ better strategies to warn Queenslanders when they are in imminent danger from events such as flash flooding.

The range of actions that have been implemented to strengthen flood resilience across Queensland will make Queensland more flood resilient. We need to continue to focus as the years pass and our memories fade so that future generations do not have to experience the destruction that Queenslanders have unfortunately had to suffer too often in the past.