




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Natural Disasters, Recovery Assistance

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.44 am): As the minister responsible for the Queensland Reconstruction Authority, I am pleased to report to the House on progress made to rebuild our state 12 months on from severe Tropical Cyclone Debbie. The combination of severe Tropical Cyclone Debbie's intensity, speed and direction wreaked havoc from Bowen to the New South Wales border.

Homes, businesses, schools and infrastructure were damaged, families were displaced, industries were crippled and towns were isolated, impacting hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders. During the height of the disaster, 235,000 customers lost power. More than 1,000 schools were closed statewide. Damage estimates to public infrastructure are in the order of more than \$650 million, with a \$450 million impact on agriculture and over \$150 million in losses to the tourism industry.

The Palaszczuk government continues to work with councils and communities to support their recovery from the destruction caused by this ferocious cyclone. We have provided \$25 million to help our primary producers, small businesses and not-for-profit organisations clean up and recover. In addition, a \$14.9 million community recovery fund was established to help restore social networks and build community resilience and capacity for the future. That funding has seen the provision of personal and financial counselling, mental health services and community development by 29 organisations across Queensland to address the longer term needs of disaster affected communities, individuals and families.

To date, the Queensland Reconstruction Authority has approved more than \$490 million in Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements payments to councils and state agencies in restoration funds for Cyclone Debbie. Almost \$1 million in assistance has been provided to sport and recreational clubs across Queensland to repair facilities and infrastructure.

After Cyclone Debbie, the Palaszczuk government fought hard to secure extraordinary disaster assistance funding from the federal government. We asked the Turnbull government to join with us and pay a 50 per cent commitment of a \$220 million fund to help battered communities recover more quickly and more fully. The Turnbull government's funding package of only \$48 million of the \$110 million requested was a body blow to a state that was already reeling from a natural disaster. However, the Palaszczuk government is standing by its \$110 million commitment to the people of Queensland to rebuild more resilient infrastructure; to help repair damaged beaches, waterways and other natural assets; and to help drive economic recovery.

As these past weeks have shown, our state continues to suffer from Mother Nature's fury. Communities across Northern, Central and Western Queensland—from Palm Island to the Northern Territory border—have experienced major widespread flooding. The state disaster coordinator, Brendan Moon, and the regional liaison officers have been on the ground in the most impacted areas such as Ingham to provide guidance on the recovery effort. So far, 34 local councils have been activated

for NDRRA assistance and the Palaszcuk government stands ready to extend this assistance as needed. While we are still on the road to recovery, the Palaszcuk government is getting on with the job to ensure as much assistance as possible gets to those who need it most.