



Speech By
Christopher Whiting

MEMBER FOR BANCROFT

Record of Proceedings, 20 September 2018

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

Report, Motion to Take Note



Mr WHITING (Bancroft—ALP) (3.38 pm): I move—

That the House take note of the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee report No. 10 titled *Consideration of Auditor-General's report 16: 2015-16—Flood resilience of river catchments* tabled on 19 July 2018.

This is quite an important report. We are talking about the flood resilience of our communities, and this is a vitally important concern to many in our electorates. I go back to what happened in 2011 in my area when I was a councillor the day after the Grantham floods.

On the same day of the Grantham flood, the creeks in my area were up and the roads were flooded. I spent a bit of time literally wading through floodwaters to try to get to some areas. After the Grantham flood, everyone was very nervous. The rain started to fall and we had an early warning system go off to all mobile phones in the Moreton Bay council area telling people to go to high ground now. That was very confusing and quite scary for a lot of people. Nothing happened, but the Moreton Bay Regional Council community was put on notice about what may be coming. My community had to do a lot of work to be fully prepared for that kind of situation which, gladly, did not happen.

In 2015, once again, floodwaters came through my area. That was the second one-in-100-year rain event that I have experienced as an elected representative for my area. That is one of the predicted outcomes of climate change that we are seeing. In 2015, Major Street in Deception Bay flooded very quickly. Water came up from the creek and there was almost a rush of water coming through houses along that street. Once again, people were not prepared for that. We had to consider how we could improve our warning systems. More than that, we had to consider how, as a community, we could be more resilient. It was clear that our houses were not resilient to such flooding. After the 2011 floods, a lot of money was spent by the state government, local government and the federal government through the Building Better Regions Fund to create a levee bank and a detention basin in the Burpengary area to protect one street. A lot of houses along that street were bought to make way for that development to make that street a lot safer.

We are seeing a lot more flooding and, with that, there is the huge potential of more damage to our communities. This report shows that the coordination within councils and between councils is not good. It should be better. The report also shows that councils need to better allocate resources to deal with floods and not rely on other levels of government to do so.

I think it is quite useful that the report also points out the benefits of the Brisbane River Catchment Flood Study. Although that study and the plans cost \$5 million, I believe they are the crucial first step in communities becoming resilient. My experience as a member of the Moreton Bay Regional Council is that a year-long study into where floodwaters go revealed some harsh and unpalatable truths about

where flooding can be expected to be experienced in the future. Our local governments need to do more of those flood studies. I note that the Ipswich City Council did not provide a response to these recommendations.

This report shows that there needs to be better resilience in our local communities and our councils. The Brisbane City Council's Flood Resilient Homes Program is a new initiative that includes an incentive scheme that provides financial assistance for modifying homes. This program could be a good template for my area as well, because we need to build homes that can cope with floodwaters. That is a much better option than going down the buyback path. That program is an example of how we can better build flood resilience in our catchments in South-East Queensland.

This report makes the interesting finding that 33 per cent of residents in the Lockyer and Somerset council areas—both very good councils—would not evacuate if they had that flood message, but five per cent of residents in Brisbane and Ipswich would not evacuate if they received that warning. It is very clear that we need to help those councils—

(Time expired)