



Speech By  
**Deb Frecklington**


**MEMBER FOR NANANGO**

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Record of Proceedings, 26 February 2019

**MOTION**

**Natural Disasters**

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.58 pm): Rallying as one to rebuild from natural disasters is in Queensland's DNA. We rely on the heroism of everyday Queenslanders when floods, bushfires and cyclones come our way. However, the grief is endless when lives are lost. This morning in Townsville a community was reeling again and, frankly, I am not sure how much more that community can take. I can only imagine what the family is going through with the death of those two little boys. It is so terribly sad and devastating, and I join with the Premier in passing on my condolences to that family.

On behalf of the opposition I would like to place on record the LNP's condolences to all of the families and loved ones of those who have lost their lives in the recent natural disasters, be it fires or floods. With great sadness we acknowledge this devastating summer of fires, cyclones and floods. We know that in late November massive bushfires broke out in Central Queensland which raged across more than a million hectares of land. I would like to place on record the LNP's thanks to our hardworking QFES workers, rural fireys, volunteers, police officers, ambos, park rangers, community members and everyone who put in an enormous effort to help our communities stay safe. On behalf of the LNP I say thank you. While more than 100 bushfires were burning across Queensland, Tropical Cyclone Owen formed off the coast. We knew that Tropical Cyclone Penny would also cause significant damage across the region. Then in late January flooding from the monsoon trough began. We have spoken in this House before about the terrible damage to areas around Townsville and the clean-up efforts.

I would like to use this time to talk about those in North-West Queensland as well. The shadow minister for emergency services, Lachlan Millar, and I went out there and visited the communities of Cloncurry and Julia Creek. It takes enormous strength to make the bush and the land your home. The strength of our landholders in that part of Queensland has never been tested like it has now. Years of drought turned almost instantly into a flooding tragedy. I had an opportunity to take a helicopter ride over some of the devastation. I would like to thank Marcus and Shelly Kerr, and of course pilot Tony, for taking me over. I will never, ever forget the sight of hundreds of cattle piled up on top of each other in the north-west corner of each paddock. I will never forget talking to hardened landholders in the Julia Creek pub that afternoon about their losses. Fifty to 75 per cent of their herds gone. I also spoke to local business owners Michael and Karina Leake—good friends of my brother—who own the Julia Creek hardware store. They also have cattle. They have lost so much, but they are only leaseholders so they are unable to get any government grant. I look forward to having discussions with the Premier and Minister for Agricultural Industry Development.

I also want to give a shout-out to hardworking bushies like Jane McMillan and Susan Dowling, who started up Sisters of the North. This amazing charity has already raised around \$250,000. The reason why they are doing this is because they believe it will get to the people who need it the most. I also want to give a shout-out to the volunteers who have come from all across the state to help. Bill

Roughan has the Toogoolawah vet practice. He packed up his kitbag and went up to the north-west because so many of the cattle that are still alive are going to die from pneumonia after what they have been through, and Bill went up there to help. While I was with the Prime Minister I was reassured to hear him say that the federal government will help rebuild, no matter how long it takes.

We have had absolute tragedies up there. I just got off the phone from speaking to a lady in Julia Creek, and these were her words to me: 'Deb, the smell is gradually growing but I'm not hearing as many guns go off.' I hope to God that we never see another tragedy like we have had across Queensland this last summer. I would like to place on record the LNP's thanks to all of the volunteers and everyone across Queensland who will help this state get through.