




Speech By
Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

Record of Proceedings, 26 February 2019

MOTION

Natural Disasters

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (3.52 pm): I rise to support the Premier's motion with a short contribution to acknowledge with great sadness the devastation caused by the recent natural disasters in Queensland. I acknowledge the contribution of the members for Thuringowa, Mundingburra and Townsville. I commend the great work that they have done for their communities during the flooding event in Townsville over the past month. I know how hard all three of these members have worked. I acknowledge them for that and also for the work that they continue to do for their communities.

During November 2018, parts of my electorate and parts of my neighbouring electorates saw the worst fires in the history of the area. Hundreds of homes were at risk and two properties were lost at Deepwater and Round Hill. Hundreds fled their properties and many lost livestock and personal possessions. I place on record my gratitude for the support and hard work of all of the emergency services personnel; front-line responders; local, state and federal agency staff who were there to help; people from the private sector; members of the community; and voluntary service providers. They all came together, not only to support the people in the region during the natural disaster events but also to continue that support through the recovery phase.

I acknowledge the tremendous work that the local disaster management group did to support the communities under threat. I acknowledge the exceptional work done by Mayor Matt Burnett, who is a very good friend of mine. His leadership during what certainly were very difficult times for the community must be commended, as must the councillors who were involved and the Gladstone Regional Council staff.

I had the pleasure of going out to the airport and meeting the firefighters who came from New South Wales, Victoria and the ACT. I acknowledge that the Premier was also at the airport when one of those groups arrived. It was great that they could shake hands with the Premier who was there to support us in our time of need. It was heartening to see many local people welcoming those firefighters to our community, many of whom had left their families and work to fly to Gladstone to help us in our time of need.

I am pleased to report that the Gladstone Regional Council has been holding community feedback sessions to discuss improvements and solutions in relation to the disaster response and also the recovery. The community debriefs for Agnes Water and Wartburg that were to be held last week have had to be rescheduled, ironically due to Cyclone Oma. I am sure that when those debriefs are held in April the community will come together, as they do, and also celebrate a community recovery event headlined by Adam Harvey.