




Speech By
Julianne Gilbert

MEMBER FOR MACKAY

Record of Proceedings, 26 February 2019

MOTION

Natural Disasters

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (3.58 pm): I rise to support the Premier's motion and to add, with all Queenslanders, my condolences and the condolences of my community to all those affected by the recent natural disasters across Queensland. This summer has been a summer like no other, with record temperatures broken, rainforests burnt and bushfires at a level that we have never experienced in living memory. As a community, we embrace those who are affected. We put our arms around them and hold out a helping hand to those who have lost property and homes. We thank the many volunteers, the SES, the rural fire brigade, QFES, the police, the ambos and all of the emergency workers, including the firefighters from other states, as well as all the good citizens who put their lives on hold to help neighbours and strangers to protect lives and property.

The fires actually came only metres away from the township of Eungella. There were donations of food and water for firefighters on the front line from individuals and businesses. An engineering company offered to service all the privately owned vehicles used to combat the fires. Disasters certainly bring out the best in our communities. I commend our local disaster management committee for the work they did in coordinating all of the services.

The smoke had barely cleared as we watched anxiously the formation of Cyclone Penny. We had never been so happy to see a cyclone. That meant that the fires would be put out. Then we turned our eyes to the north and watched the rain depression move over Townsville and not move. There was initial joy to see the Townsville water supply replenished and see the rain move out to western regions to quench the ground that had been in prolonged drought. It was delightful to see the young and old splashing around in the rain, dams filling and green shoots starting to poke up their heads.

One thing we can be sure of is that weather never follows predicted paths. While we were preparing for a predicted 700 millimetres of rain in Mackay we only had squalls. The rain stayed up to the north and north-west. Our neighbours bore the brunt of the relentless rain that was measured in metres instead of centimetres. Our excitement for the rain in the thirsty areas to the north turned to horror and sadness as we saw the unfolding flood take over. Our hearts go out to our neighbours as they rebuild their lives and livelihoods. We are with them as they clean away the mud.

(Time expired)