




Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR MILLER

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Weather Events, Transport Infrastructure

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (9.56 am): The unprecedented flooding in North and North-West Queensland has severely impacted and damaged road and rail infrastructure. As soon as floodwaters receded, TMR and Queensland Rail workers were hard at work restoring road and rail access. Works have been underway at the Macrossan Bridge on the Flinders Highway, the Seymour River north of Ingham, at Rooney's and Bowen Road bridges in Townsville, the Landsborough Highway and the Wills, Burke and Gulf developmental roads out west.

Queensland Rail crews have already repaired damage to 50 sites and four rail bridges along the 300 kilometres of track on the Mount Isa line between Cloncurry and Hughenden. Yesterday, a rail recovery task force, created with the sole focus of restoring access on the Mount Isa line, met for the first time in Townsville. As reported by the Premier, the task force has 400 rail specialists dedicated to the task and believes it can reopen the line by late April to early May, of course depending on the weather from the remaining wet season. We understand how important the supply chain is for the livelihood of North and North-West Queensland local communities, their jobs and the whole Queensland economy. Getting freight moving on the line is critical for Queensland's mining and agricultural exports and every effort will be made to open it sooner if possible.

Removing the Pacific National freight train wreck at Nelia, east of Julia Creek, will be a significant logistical task. Pacific National is leading that recovery with support from other agencies, including Queensland Rail and the Department of Environment and Science. Independent environmental specialists are playing a key role in developing the action plan that guides that recovery. We will continue to keep the community up to date with progress.

Last week, I travelled to the north-west to meet the mayors in Cloncurry and the McKinlay shire and see firsthand the damage that their communities are dealing with. On sections of the Flinders Highway between Richmond and Julia Creek, floodwaters have shredded bitumen like confetti. Given the devastation, I am pleased to report that Transport and Main Roads expects to reopen those sections of the highway to traffic tomorrow. More than 150 Transport and Main Roads and RoadTek staff have worked long hours in extremely hot conditions to clear debris, inspect and rectify damage and manage roadblocks.

Earlier this month I was in Townsville to see the damage at Hervey Range Road, Paluma and the Bowen Road bridge, and also to our rail network where I met and thanked all rail crews working very hard on the Rooney's rail bridge. Specialists blasted boulders on Mount Spec Road so that emergency vehicles could access Paluma. Multiple landslips opened up under-road fissures on a 150-metre stretch of Hervey Range Road. Last Thursday that road reopened under traffic control, thanks to the hard work of Transport and Main Roads and Townsville City Council's crews. I thank them for their work. Recovery will take time—such as the long-term works required at the Alice River bridge—but we are committed to restoring our networks as soon as possible.

Recovery is also underway in Central and North Queensland following the bushfires that raged through the Eungella Range and threatened Gracemere last November. The government's response to this summer of extreme weather events has relied on the leadership and courage of women and men in our lead agencies across Queensland who have stepped up in our darkest times. I thank them all for giving so much to support the recovery in North-West, North and Central Queensland.