




Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR MILLER

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Rail, Flood Recovery

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.02 am): The past month has been a true example of the strong Queensland spirit. Lashed by unprecedented extreme rainfall, our north and north-west Queensland communities have rallied to rebuild and recover. Nowhere is this truer than on the 1,000-kilometre-long Mount Isa rail line, where a 400-strong workforce has been working around the clock in often very high summer temperatures to reopen one of the state's most critical transport links. The Mount Isa line is a crucial piece of infrastructure to the north-west minerals province and the North Queensland economy. Getting business and community moving again on the line has been an absolute priority for the Palaszczuk government, and I am pleased to confirm that the line remains on track to reopen between late April and mid-May.

Earlier this month Queensland Rail completed critical repairs between Richmond and Hughenden. I am pleased to report to the House that last week a freight service travelled between Richmond and Townsville. This week crews have started restoring the line between Oorindi and Tibbarri. These works range from reconstructing embankments and track foundations to culvert and bridge restoration and repairs and the relaying of rail, track and ballast. In Nelia, works to recover the Pacific National train is progressing, with all 81 wagons to be fully removed in the coming week. More than 1,700 sleepers and 4,000 tonnes of ballast are being delivered to Nelia to build a 1.2-kilometre deviation that will allow trains to resume travel while the recovery continues.

One of the challenges facing the recovery has been housing the 400-strong workforce. I am pleased to report to the House that Queensland Rail and Minister de Brenni's Department of Housing and Public Works have worked together to establish camps at both Richmond and Julia Creek. These camps have become a hive of activity that have also provided a much needed boost to the local economy, with local businesses providing food, cleaning services and supplies. I would like to acknowledge the hard work of the task force and all of the locals who have been rebuilding our communities in North-West Queensland.

I would also like to acknowledge the donation of disused rail to the volunteer organisation BlazeAid. The rail will be used to assist with the rebuilding of fencing in North-West Queensland communities. The recovery of the Mount Isa rail line is a true demonstration of the Queensland spirit, and I look forward to the line being fully restored and reopened.