



Speech By  
**Ann Leahy**


**MEMBER FOR WARREGO**

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Record of Proceedings, 22 April 2021

### **PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Duvel, Mr K; Charleville Floods of 1990; McKay, Mr A**

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (2.06 pm): I just wish to acknowledge Karsten Duvel, who is sitting in the public gallery at the moment. He is the youth member for Warrego. It is 31 years and one day since the devastating Charleville floods. The locals were going to have a celebration last year at the 30-year mark. However, COVID intervened. Thirty-one years on, the Murweh shire have organised five days of events this week to commemorate the floods and the first ever mud army, the work camp.

The flood inundated the town at night and I still recall one lady who told me that she spoke to her elderly neighbour who said, 'The flood, it will be fine. Just go to bed. The river will be down in the morning.' Unfortunately, this lady was awoken late in the night. She stepped out of bed in the dark and was knee deep in water in her house.

On the morning of 21 April 1990 more than 2,800 residents were taken to the airport for shelter. There were only two boats to rescue people and it was amazing there were no fatalities. The water was travelling at about 43 kilometres an hour down the streets. The town looked like a war zone once the water receded. The work camp of low-security prisoners was established to help people with clean-up, and this work camp still operates today.

Charleville now has a levee bank and a diversion channel on Bradley's Gully and the likelihood of a 1990 event is mitigated against. I commend the Murweh shire on the commemoration events and all those who have helped the residents over a period of years with the recovery. Charleville people are proud and resilient and some of the most friendly and hospitable ones you will ever meet.

I wish to make mention of Ashley McKay, a constituent of mine from Augathella and Injune. I have personally known Ashley for over 20 years. He was a loyal friend and a mentor to many, including myself. He was a fierce advocate for agriculture. He was a founding president of the Australian Campdraft Association, helped establish the Property Rights Australia organisation and played major roles in the Cattlemens Union. Ashley chaired the committee that put together broadscale tree-clearing policy under the Borbidge government. Unfortunately, Ashley was unfairly vilified and pursued for six years in the courts by successive Labor governments. He won his cases against the government.

He had a passion for stock horses and agricultural pursuits involving beef cattle production. Sadly, Ashley was killed in a horseriding accident yesterday. I extend my deepest sympathy to his soulmate, Doris, and his de facto grandchildren who managed Torres Park.