




Speech By
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ADJOURNMENT

Queensland Floods, South Brisbane Electorate

 **Dr MacMAHON** (South Brisbane—Grn) (7.21 pm): Twice now in the space of 11 years my community has experienced devastating flooding. Queensland is a huge state and weather extremes go along with much of the territory, but climate change is making disasters more frequent, more extreme and less predictable. In the past few weeks it has been the most marginalised who have been hit the hardest. It has been renters, pensioners, migrant families and people with disabilities who have faced power outages, flooding, displacement, lost possessions, damaged housing and a huge clean-up ahead of them. Financial support, we are hearing from the ground, has been lacking.

The government launched a grants program, which was initially meant to close after seven days. After seven days many of these people are still dealing with clean-up and the smell of mud is still on their clothes. Thankfully, the time for people to apply for these grants has been extended, but these grants contrast rather sharply with the federal grants of \$1,000 per adult promptly paid to claimants. The state grants are too small, too hard to apply for and too narrow in terms of who can get them.

Let's contrast them with the help available from the state government after the 2011 floods: a first round of \$1,000 per person affected by the floods and a second round of up to \$100,000 to help with rehoming people and rebuilding homes. We simply have not seen this level of leadership in the current floods. It is this government's common approach to grants and community support that we have seen, including during the pandemic. It is not enough to announce grants and programs for individuals or small businesses if eligibility is too narrow, they close too quickly or they expire when a tiny pot of money runs out. Even now with the pandemic still going, people and small business are calling out for help, with many grants that were available in 2020 no longer available.

Joining members of my local community in the flood clean-up, I was struck by seeing everyday people clean up the mess made by fossil fuel companies and property developers, who have been let off the hook. Developers in Queensland, facilitated by the councils and state government, have made huge gains from building cheap housing on flood plains. They have been allowed to build higher and wider and with more car parking than stipulated in neighbourhood plans while local residents have no say. With low infrastructure charges and skyrocketing house prices, they have made millions in profit but are completely off the hook when it comes to the clean-up. If we were to put a tax on their windfalls from rezoning, enact inclusionary zoning and lift caps on infrastructure charges, we would make a start towards ensuring that the big end of town pays its way. We also need a ban on development on flood plains, offer house buybacks and mandate that apartment blocks have flood response plans to protect people and possessions. Our campaigns to expand riverside parkland would help flood-proof our city as well. Parkland in places like Riverside Drive and the former ABC site in Maiwar is a much more flood-proof use of land than cramming housing onto it and putting people at risk.