



Speech By  
**Amy MacMahon**


**MEMBER FOR SOUTH BRISBANE**

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## MOTION

### Queensland Floods

 **Dr MacMAHON** (South Brisbane—Grn) (3.37 pm): It has been a very difficult few weeks in my community, and I want to join this House in acknowledging this devastation with great sadness and extend our deepest sympathies to those who have lost loved ones, including a man who very sadly died at Stones Corner.

Like so many Queenslanders, people in my electorate were hit by massive rainfall, high tides, rising stormwater and floods that followed along the Brisbane River and Norman Creek. Like everywhere, throughout South Brisbane it was the most marginalised who were hit the hardest. Renters, pensioners, migrant families and people with disabilities, hit with power outages, flooding, no public transport and displacement, lost possessions and damaged homes. I spoke with a resident who uses a wheelchair who was stuck in their apartment when the lifts stopped working and an elderly couple who walked up and down a dozen flights of stairs with no lights. We spoke with people who had lost precious family photos. We did loads of laundry for a single mum who had all of her family's clothes destroyed by the flood. We helped an elderly migrant in East Brisbane haul his flooded fridge to the sidewalk. We spoke with people who had been displaced from their homes and were sleeping with neighbours and friends.

I was so grateful to help with the clean-up and see up close the immense resilience of the South Brisbane community. Organisations like West End Community House, West End Community Association, Kurilpa Futures, local P&Cs, the East Brisbane Bowls Club, Micah Projects and local small businesses as well as our emergency services stepped up to provide support, food, accommodation, a place to charge phones, help with the clean-up and a friendly face. I was also proud to be part of a huge team of volunteers who helped clean up from West End to East Brisbane, Woolloongabba and Kangaroo Point.

One clean-up stands out particularly to me. Residents from an apartment tower in Ferry Road, West End, asked for help cleaning up their basement as the Mud Army had bafflingly been called off. This section of West End has seen an incredible boom in large apartment blocks, many of which were approved after the 2011 floods. I met up with Greens volunteers and about a dozen residents from that apartment tower. The residents had spent the morning hauling out flooded possessions and the road was piled high with furniture and ruined goods. Going into the basement was an apocalyptic scene. Lights and fans in the basement were not working. The building was so poorly designed that all of the basement electrics had flooded and broken.

We entered the basement by walking down a pitch-black stairwell. On the bottom floor, there were a few floodlights plugged in. The air was thick and hazy, and it smelt like sewage and mud. The air quality was so bad that residents were carrying carbon dioxide monitors. We had about 20 or so young people—home owners, renters and volunteers—spending their weekend cleaning this basement, cleaning up the mess created by poor planning, property developers and multinational fossil fuel corporations.

This flood was a climate catastrophe—exactly in line with the predictions that experts have been making for decades. As sea levels rise, as the atmosphere heats up and as weather patterns become wildly variable, we will see more and more catastrophic floods on a less predictable basis. Yet the big mining companies who profit off coal and gas and the property developers who have made millions off our community, including developing on flood plains, walk away with massive profits, leaving ordinary people literally to clean up their mess.

Yesterday when the member for Maiwar asked the Premier if this catastrophe meant anything for Queensland's ambitions for more coal and gas, we got no answer. We got a reference to Queensland's renewable energy target, which does nothing to avoid catastrophic climate change because it does nothing to transition away from fossil fuels. We need a science based climate pollution cut of at least 75 per cent and an orderly phase-out of coal and gas by at least 2030, with support for workers and coal communities who have given us so much.

The Treasurer got up yesterday to talk about how expensive this crisis was for the state's bottom line, but the government would rather make everyday people pay with power outages, lost property, clean-up, lost days of work and trauma than stand up to the fossil fuel companies. Labor crow about their links to these industries constantly, but they never say the quiet bit out loud—that their plan is to make the community shoulder the burden of the chaos of climate change and let these companies keep profiting off the impacts on everyday Queenslanders. As we just saw, it is everyday people, particularly young people, who will live with this mess. I move the following amendment—

That a new paragraph 6. be added:

'6. commits to protecting Queenslanders from even more deadly and dangerous floods and extreme weather by adopting a science based climate pollution cut of 75 per cent on 2005 levels and an orderly phase-out of coal and gas by 2030.'

I table this amendment, and I urge the House to take action on the causes of climate change.

*Tabled paper:* Amendment moved by the member for South Brisbane, Dr Amy MacMahon MP, to the motion moved by the Premier and Minister for the Olympics, Hon. Annastacia Palaszczuk, titled 'Queensland Floods' [303](#).