




Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Queensland Floods, Palaszczuk Labor Government

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (2.06 pm): During a natural disaster, calm leadership and clear communication are required. Queenslanders look to the Premier and all state government ministers for certainty of message and for an understanding of the situation and what is required during large-scale natural disasters. The messaging and communication from the Palaszczuk state Labor government through the recent South-East Queensland severe weather and flood event a fortnight ago was nothing short of chaotic, confusing and, at times, downright dangerous.

Nowhere was this more evident than with the messaging about our Queensland schools. At a time when facts and certainty of information were of paramount importance, students, parents, teachers and school staff had to endure a week of mixed messages and chaos from the Labor Premier and the Labor Minister for Education. These matters are very serious and, whilst errors can occur, it is important that comprehensive reviews take place and that learnings are implemented to ensure mistakes are not repeated in the future.

On the afternoon of Monday, 28 February we saw Queensland schools communicating to their families that they would reopen for students the following day. This was supposedly based on guidance and information which was being provided by the Department of Education. Just hours later, on the Monday evening, the Labor Minister for Education had to rush out a media release confirming that, in fact, all South-East Queensland schools would be closed. The damage had already been done, and all schools had to urgently contact parents, teachers and families—because of the incompetence of the Palaszczuk Labor government. The inconsistency and uncertainty that so many families and school staff had to endure was extremely poor leadership. Days later, the incompetence of the state Labor government was on full display again after a shambolic press conference by the Labor Premier, Anastacia Palaszczuk.

The Labor Premier's mixed messages on schools caused chaos and confusion across South-East Queensland which was only aided and abetted by the Premier's own team of spin doctors, who could not properly communicate essential information across multiple social media platforms. That afternoon, I was inundated by concerned parents and teachers who were unsure of what advice to follow. At a time when Queenslanders were only just starting to pick up the pieces and begin the difficult task of cleaning up and rebuilding, countless volunteers left what they were doing to collect their children. This was all because the state Labor government could not communicate clearly about the specific areas and communities that the advice applied to.

How do I know all this? At the time I was with the state Leader of the Opposition, David Crisafulli. We were cleaning up houses and businesses in my electorate of Moggill. There were parents volunteering alongside us who immediately thought they had to abandon what they were doing and collect their children, because that is what the Premier said to do. This happens when you have a state government that is far more concerned with how things look than how they are. Queensland parents, teachers and students deserve better.

(Time expired)