




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

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MOTION

Queensland Floods

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.23 am): I have already placed on record my sincere thanks to those who have served us in this particularly challenging time, the likes of the emergency services, the SES and all those volunteers. I wish to again join with the Premier in putting forward our heartfelt sympathies to the families of those 13 victims. Disasters are a challenging time, and for families who lose loved ones, it is a particularly difficult moment.

Disasters bring out the best and the worst of people. We have seen the worst with the looting, but we have also seen the best. It is the best that I want to focus on. As I have spent the last couple of weeks going around the affected areas, I have seen the best in the eyes of Queenslanders. When you meet someone who has lost everything and the first thing they say is, 'Oh well, there's someone who's worse off than me, mate,' you know what sort of state this is. I think of those sporting and community groups who have put so much into their prized associations. To see the likes of the Mitchelton Football Club have a brand new playing surface picked up like a piece of cloth and thrown out is particularly harrowing for the clubs. The Scouts organisation—again picking up the pieces.

I think of those rural communities who have had their roads so badly damaged, their lifeblood for getting products to market and kids to schools. That is particularly challenging for those communities. I think of people I met in the evacuation centre sitting on the end of a fold-out bed and the only thing left in their possession is a little bag they grabbed as they were rescued by those heroes.

I particularly think of those people who had their homes and businesses destroyed. There is one in particular that moved me, and that was when I went to Stafford and met a gentleman by the name of Tim. Tim was on his way to help his son whose house had floodwater rising nearby. On the way he decided to call on his business. The business was located in an area that did not flood in 2011 and many say that it did not flood in 1974, so he was not expecting to see water. Tim owns an electrical hire business. As he pulled into his street, he saw millions of dollars of equipment under water—none of it insured. Many businesses struggle to get flood insurance. If they did not get it in 2011 or 1974, you can understand why he did not have it.

When I met him I met many people, including competitors to his business who sent staff there. They were frantically pulling apart the electrics to walk it across the street to another business owner who had vacated a tenancy which had been flooded. They had cleaned it out as quickly as possible and turned on the aircon to try to have a red hot go at getting this equipment dried out so that maybe he could get back on his feet. I spoke to him a couple of days ago. Some of that equipment is starting to turn on; some of it is not. It is a gamble and he hopes that he can get enough to get back on his feet and start trading. That is the Queensland spirit that I love.

We are passionate about making Queensland the most disaster resilient state in the nation. There are three elements to that and there are three issues that I see could be improved based on the last disaster I witnessed. One is messaging, two is mitigation and three is betterment. On the messaging,

we have to call it for what it is. There were people I met who were pulling out everything they owned and tipping it out onto the street who said, 'We were told, "Please, there is no cause for concern," on Saturday.' Disasters are about making the right calls at the right time, and messages matter. When you have different messages about whether or not schools should be opened or closed or you should pick up your kids or not, that matters. When you announce a different recovery coordinator in the space of one press conference, that matters. Consistency in messaging matters.

We have to get back to a time of building mitigation, and I think of the levees that I played a very small part in: Eulo, Wyandra and St George. They have stood the test of time. I think of drainage and levee combinations in places like Roma and Maryborough. They work and we must get back there.

Finally, on betterment, we must get back to a stage where we have a rolling Betterment Fund so we build resilience into our infrastructure so we do not continue to make the same mistakes time and time again.