




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

Record of Proceedings, 16 March 2022

MOTION

Queensland Floods

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (12.02 pm): I would like to start by expressing my sincerest condolences to the families and friends of the 13 Queenslanders who lost their lives during the terrible weather event. Within the Nanango electorate we experienced that firsthand. We sadly lost Wondai local Mr Greg Hodges in the floodwaters at MP Creek. On the road at Glen Esk we lost Dr Alex Klestov of Brisbane, who was swept off the road. I also reflect on the tragic loss of our Lowood group SES volunteer, Merryl Dray, who was from Coominya in my electorate. Merryl Dray died after her vehicle was swept off the road by floodwaters while responding to a request for help from a family in the Lockyer Valley. That is a reminder of the risks faced by our first responders. I give a massive shout-out to all our first responders, police officers and emergency workers.

In the clean-up process I had an opportunity to call in to the Coominya rural fires. David Stephens and his team certainly need to be congratulated for their hard work. I think they said that they did something like 24 rescues on the first night of the terrible heavy rainfalls in the lower Somerset area. I want to put on the record of this House the effect that the flood event had in the Somerset region. I have sat in this House for the past two days and the words ‘Somerset region’ have been missed out from every single statement by the government. I was on the Somerset Local Disaster Management Group. I give a massive shout-out to Mayor Graeme Lehmann and his team who worked exceedingly hard. Once again the Somerset was missed out in the middle of the floods and it gets out missed in the acknowledgements in this chamber. I stand here to acknowledge the Somerset.

This morning the roads minister listed a number of roads. What about the Brisbane Valley Highway, where my communities were cut off? In the South Burnett, the Cherbourg Regional Council was cut off for three days. Where is the acknowledgement of that? I am here to give that acknowledgement on behalf of my community. The communities around Mount Tarampa and Patrick Estate deserve a voice in this House, but all those opposite can talk about is Lowood. Whilst we love Lowood, Jim—I have to say it; we love Lowood—other areas in the Somerset continually miss out when it comes to this government.

It was great to see the federal government supporting us. The ADF came to help the Somerset region. I give a massive shout-out to the ADF guys. I met and spoke with some of those guys. The homes of two of them were flooded in Brisbane, but where were they? They were in the Coominya region, helping out my local community! I say ‘thank you’ and give a big shout-out to those guys.

I want to say this: we need clearer communication. There is always a fight over who is in South-East Queensland. I was visiting Nanango State High School to talk to a group of Year 11 students. When I left I saw a line-up of cars as parents came to pick up their kids from school. It was the middle of a sunny day in Nanango. The principal did not know and the parents did not know, but the Premier was saying, ‘At schools in South-East Queensland, pick up your kids! Go to school quick and pick up your kids!’

My electorate has four school regions. At each one of those four regions, people had no clue about what was actually happening at their schools. I have received many letters of complaint from the school communities within my Nanango electorate about the communication fail that happened around school closures. Parents did not know whether or not they should pick up their children. That decision should be made at a local level. I implore the government to allow the local principals in the local areas to make those decisions on behalf of the parents and for the safety of the kids. The Premier said 'everywhere from Bundaberg to the coast'. In the middle of that is the mighty Nanango electorate. We need clearer communication.