




Speech By
Hon. Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Floods, Community Recovery Hubs

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (10.08 am): As Queensland continues its recovery from the recent devastating floods, it is important to review the event and understand exactly what unfolded. Let us look at what we know. We know that South-East Queensland received a massive amount of water—record rainfall, in fact. In the last week in February some areas of South-East Queensland recorded almost two metres of rain. In that time Brisbane recorded 80 per cent of its annual rainfall average—nearly a whole year's worth of rain in just a week.

During that extreme and constant downpour, Wivenhoe Dam performed exactly as it was designed to do. At the peak of the weather event, Wivenhoe Dam held back more than 2.2 million megalitres of water—or, as we have heard before, the equivalent of four Sydney harbours—from entering the Brisbane River. Without Wivenhoe Dam, the devastating flood we saw in South-East Queensland would have been worse. During the event, Seqwater made steady controlled releases below the peak river levels so as not to exacerbate the already naturally occurring flood in Brisbane.

I take this opportunity to thank all of the Seqwater staff in Queensland who worked around the clock to keep Queenslanders safe. Early on Sunday, 27 February the water treatment plants at Mount Crosby and North Pine went offline after the intense heavy rain washed soil and debris into the creeks and waterways that flow into those treatment plants. At the peak, the cloudiness and turbidity of the water at the Mount Crosby plant increased by up to 100 times the normal amount. A number of the Seqwater staff who were fixing the Mount Crosby east bank became isolated by floodwater and ended up sleeping at the plant for several nights before they could be choppered out. We are so lucky to have those hardworking Queenslanders who worked tirelessly to get those plants back online.

South-East Queenslanders should also be thanking the Labor government that built the Gold Coast desalination plant, which kicked into gear during the event. The taps never ran dry in Brisbane because that desalination plant did its jobs, pumping nearly 125 Olympic swimming pools worth of drinking water into the South-East Queensland water grid during the event. More than 1.6 million people rely on the sturdy South-East Queensland water network. I am proud to say that that infrastructure and our contingencies came through.

This weather event proved that nothing is certain and things can certainly change quickly, but Queenslanders can be confident that the Palaszczuk government does not take chances on water security. I am sure many will agree that we do not need another weather event to test our flood mitigation infrastructure any time soon, but we can take great comfort in knowing and be confident that Wivenhoe performed exactly as it was designed to perform and remains ready to keep Queenslanders safe at any time.