



Speech By  
**Hon. Grace Grace**


**MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 March 2022

## MOTION

### Queensland Floods

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (11.47 am): That is all we get from the other side—whinge, whinge, whinge, whine, whine, whine. Once again I reiterate that those opposite are more interested in throwing mud than cleaning it up. They should get out into their electorates and help those people clean up. I give my condolences to those who lost their lives in this unbelievable rain event and tragic circumstance that we found ourselves in.

Everyone is a genius with the benefit of hindsight, but I will say one thing: safety always comes first and I would rather see a sunny sky or a cloudy sky than a family in tragic circumstances any day. Aren't they all geniuses with the benefit of hindsight? The recent floods also affected my electorate and I welcome the Inspector-General of Emergency Management, Alistair Dawson, taking submissions until 19 April in relation to reviewing how the flood went. I have met with Major General Jake Ellwood, who is doing a great job getting around. It is a pleasure to support the motion moved by the Premier.

In my own electorate it was the usual streets that get flooded unfortunately such as Welsby Street in New Farm. It was great to walk around and see those families getting back to normality. Rod has lived in Welsby Street for 40 years and there he was cleaning. Unfortunately his children had slept in that morning and they were not helping him, but he assured me that they were on their way. Even Tim in my office who lives in Welsby Street was impacted by the floodwaters in that he was stranded as they could not get out because the waters had risen so quickly.

Sydney Street is another one where the car parks underneath the unit buildings flood, and some of the smaller businesses in Welsby Street and Sydney Street were impacted as well. The iconic Merthyr Village is run by the Sorbello family, who did an amazing job getting that centre up and running again. Matt Sorbello was one of the first businesspeople on the phone to me needing assistance from Energex. We put them in contact because of the electricity issues at the centre, the difficulty being that where the electricals are it is very hard to get the shopping centre up and running. They had a generator. They were talking with Energex and I was amazed that the centre was open. Good old New Farm Deli had patrons coming in to buy goods, so fortunately Maria and Vince were not impacted at that point in time.

There was flooding in streets around Moray Street: Sargent Street and Oxlade Drive. My heart goes out to Rachel and Ian. They worked tirelessly to keep the water out of their place. I met Kristy from Fuljames Lane. It was her first flood. She had only been living in the area for five years. She had never experienced it before. She got emotional when she talked about her neighbours guiding her through what to do. She was very thankful for their help. Her complaint was that it was coming up through the stormwater drain. I will talk a little bit more about that later.

Herston saw significant damage, particularly along Butterfield Street. I visited Herston Lodge. It is a supported accommodation facility. We dropped off some care bags. I thank the Young Allies Foundation that put them together. They normally provide care packs to kids in hospital, but they wanted

to show support for the flood victims. We handed many of them out to Herston Lodge, on the streets of New Farm and other suburbs and we dropped off the remaining packs at the New Farm Neighbourhood Centre which does a great job. I am concerned that we need to implement an evacuation plan for Herston Lodge. These are supported accommodation residents who really do need assistance. I will work with Ann and her staff at that lodge to work out an evacuation plan for when these rains come—and they will come again.

I love my electorate. I saw strangers coming up to Herston Lodge. There were SES crews there helping them out. The support was overwhelming. It makes me proud to be the member for McConnel. Small businesses are very welcoming of our grants of \$50,000 and \$20,000 for not-for-profit sporting organisations. The terms of reference are very well written. I want to look into backflow valves. Are they working? Can we do better? There were many complaints of water coming through the drains, including in front of my own electorate office. We get very little information about the efficiency of backflow valves. It is something that I will be raising during the inquiry.

There were mighty efforts by many at the schools that were impacted. Thank you to all the school communities, QBuild, emergency services staff and my own staff, Judi and Chris, who were out on the streets handing out bags, talking to residents, giving them comfort and doing all that they could to get grants in the hands of small business.