



Speech By  
**Jennifer Howard**


**MEMBER FOR IPSWICH**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 March 2022

**MOTION**

**Queensland Floods**

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (2.30 pm): The extreme weather and floods that hit South-East Queensland in late February is another one for our records. The amount of rain that fell in the space of a few days was monumental in terms of the volume and the terrifying speed with which it filled our creeks, rivers and gullies. It was scary and it was lethal. I extend my sincere condolences to the families and loved ones of those people who lost their lives during the flood event.

It has been heartwrenching to see the damage to people's homes and the piles of belongings and household goods on the footpaths. The task of rebuilding and replacing household items is going to be long and difficult, especially for those without insurance. There were 535 buildings in the Ipswich area which were flood impacted and sustained some sort of damage. More than 8,000 properties also lost power, some for up to a week, and I want to take this opportunity to thank all those electricians on the ground working day and night to restore that power. I am grateful for the generous spirit shown by the Ipswich community and, as mentioned in my adjournment speech last night, I again want to thank all of our emergency services—the police, ambulance officers and firefighters, the ADF and SES.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Martin): Pause the clock. I am sorry, member for Ipswich. I ask all members to come to order. There has been continual quarrelling across the chamber and I am having trouble hearing the member for Ipswich. I ask everybody to please keep it to themselves so we can listen to the member for Ipswich.

**Ms HOWARD:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker; I appreciate that. I also wish to acknowledge and thank the Ipswich City Council, Energex, department of communities and housing officers at the Ipswich community recovery hub and all of the selfless volunteers and community groups like Orange Sky Laundry who were up at the evacuation centre along with Lifeline and the Salvation Army. The Palaszczuk government's support packages for individuals suffering hardship from the floods will go a long way in helping them get back on their feet. I am pleased to see that small businesses are also getting the financial support they need. It is tragic for small business owners to see their livelihoods go under water. The clean-up, repair and rebuilding efforts cause them significant hardship and loss of income for quite some time, and all on the back of Omicron. Some small businesses affected by the floods were already struggling due to the Omicron wave, so our support is crucial in helping them get back on their feet.

After the 2011 floods the local chamber of commerce ran the Shop Ipswich campaign and I would encourage Ipswich people to adopt that thinking again. It is one of the best and easiest ways to help out our local businesses to recover. Further support is also being provided through the Palaszczuk government's and the federal government's \$559 million disaster assistance package for flood-affected Queensland businesses. Grants of up to \$50,000 are now available to small businesses to assist them in the massive clean-up and the repair effort. Small businesses can also apply for loans of up to \$100,000 to help with essential working capital for expenses as well as loans of up to \$250,000 to help

with re-establishing normal operations. In a city like Ipswich, our small businesses are the lifeblood of our community. They contribute millions of dollars to our local economy and employ tens of thousands of people. It is essential that we get them up and running again so that they can continue to support our local economy, keep people employed and provide essential services that our city needs.

Ipswich's sporting and community clubs are also an incredibly important part of our community. A few of Ipswich's sporting clubs were flooded, including the Ipswich Knights Soccer Club and the Ipswich Basketball Association complex next door. The Ipswich & West Moreton BMX Club just near where I live also sustained flood damage to its new track. A large portion of our community depends on sporting clubs for activity and recreation, so it is essential that our clubs get the support they need to clean up, repair and get back on track. The Palaszczuk government is driving that support with a joint state and federal package of \$20,000 grants to help clubs repair damaged infrastructure and fields and replace lost equipment. Our government is providing \$5,000 grants to sporting clubs in addition to help them with the immediate funding they need with their clean-up efforts, and there is quite a bit of that going on.

Helping Queenslanders recover is our top priority right now. The Palaszczuk government's raft of support packages, grants and loans are essential for those who have lost everything—their livelihoods, their household goods, even the roof over their heads. I know that there are many people in Ipswich right now whose homes are uninhabitable due to significant flood damage. These support packages will go a long way towards helping them and we know that finding alternative accommodation is extremely difficult at this moment.

I want to thank the Minister for Housing, Leeanne Enoch, who came out to our community recovery hub last week. I thought it was beautiful the way she just sat there and listened to the clients and to the staff on the ground who expressed to her in no uncertain terms how crucial the need for housing and support is. She made it very clear to us that she understands the issues and I thank her for her time and her consideration of those things. I want to acknowledge the exceptional Ipswich people. The qualities that you have make you stand out and they make me want to fight every day.