




Speech By
Jonty Bush

MEMBER FOR COOPER

Record of Proceedings, 15 March 2022

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Queensland Floods, Cooper Electorate

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (2.51 pm): I rise to make a contribution to today's debate. Like so many suburbs across Queensland in the past three weeks, my electorate has been profoundly impacted by the recent flooding events and off the back of a global pandemic. I think our communities have experienced so much and continue to show such perseverance, resilience and strength.

In our electorate we received about a year's worth of rain over a weekend. While fortunately the majority of us had pretty minor impacts—road closures and roof leaks—there were a number in our community who were profoundly impacted. The homes of some people have been completely destroyed, as we all know—walls torn apart, floorboards soaked and swollen—but I think it is probably the loss of contents, for me, that has been quite profound and revealing. I do not think anything quite describes, particularly as a new member, the feeling of walking down a street and seeing a person's entire contents of their home, through a whole row, spilled out onto the road. It is quite a confronting scene.

Like many members, I have been helping out with the clean-up. It is surreal to see people having to toss out birthday presents, jewellery and photos because these are not things that they can keep with them—really treasured items. It has been such an extraordinary couple of weeks for many.

In our electorate, we have the Enoggera and Ithaca creeks. Ordinarily these are sanctuaries where kids can play and dogs can swim, but as a result of what we are calling the rain bomb that sat over Brisbane, the Enoggera Reservoir went from 109 per cent to 244 per cent capacity overnight, which is simply extraordinary. It broke a record. This, coupled with the rain that sat over Brisbane, completely inundated the creeks around us, causing flooding in areas in our local community where we have never seen flooding before.

The Premier spoke this morning of the swiftwater rescue of Paul and Debbie from Ashgrove Avenue. It is incredible footage. We all have very busy lives, but, if you have a moment, hop onto the Premier's social media and have a look at it. It is an extraordinary thing to see a rapid river running through the suburb of Ashgrove. Water went from puddles to a waist-high, fast-moving river in about 3½ hours. It was not only the pace that the water was moving but also the debris, the barbed wire, garden sheds and tools which had been picked up and were washing through.

I really want to acknowledge the actions of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and SES who completed about 600 rescues over that weekend—extraordinary work from very brave men and women who get about their job without the need for a thank you; incredible acts of heroism.

I would also like to thank the Premier for coming out and speaking with people who were impacted and speaking with our QFES officers who conducted the swiftwater rescues in Ashgrove. It was great to see her out and speaking with people. It really lifted the spirits of our community.

We also had a visit from our Prime Minister who visited one of our sporting facilities—the basketball courts where my daughter plays in Auchenflower. A shout-out to my partner, Matt, who is my daughter's coach. I do not know how he does it—it is a great club. Obviously the PM was looking for a photo opportunity and, as the Minister for Tourism stated this morning, they quickly put him hard at work and gave him a mop to start mopping up a floor that they have been trying to keep wet during this period to stop it from cracking and swelling. We all had a chuckle when we saw that photo. Honestly you could not make this stuff up; it is quite remarkable.

As slapstick as that is, the decisions made by the federal coalition government are really nothing to laugh at, nor their inability to acknowledge, let alone address, that climate change is impacting on our communities now. The once-in-100-year flood is fast becoming a once-in-a-decade flooding event. This is a government that repeatedly fails to listen to expert advice, whether it is in relation to managing COVID or any one of Australia's natural disasters. There are 80 recommendations of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements that are still awaiting implementation. The \$4 billion natural disaster fund has barely been tapped. The Queensland state government recommended 20 projects for funding and just three were approved.

One of the projects not approved was an early warning communications project which, I can tell you, would have made a real tangible difference to people in my community, in my electorate, who only received a text message from Brisbane City Council that they were about to be flooded 24 hours after they were in fact flooded, just adding insult to injury.