



Speech By  
**Laura Gerber**


**MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 March 2022

## MOTION

### Queensland Floods

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (4.33 pm): There was over 700 millilitres of rain in three days, over \$2.5 billion worth of damage and tragically 13 lives lost. One of those lives lost was a member of our Currumbin community. I take this moment to again extend my deepest sympathies to the family and friends of the Currumbin Valley resident who lost his life in the floodwaters on 27 February 2022. He lost his life alongside his dog. It is a very sad loss for our community. I pay tribute to the members of the Surf Life Saving Queensland Point Danger Branch who attended the tragedy and worked with police and swiftwater rescue to bring his body and the body of his dog home.

In Currumbin, residents in the Tallebudgera Valley, Currumbin Valley and Elanora experienced devastating localised flooding the likes of which we have not seen before. Homes in Elanora, particularly in the streets around Avocado Street and Nineteenth Avenue, were completely inundated. Locals had to be evacuated from their homes, the valleys were cut off by landslides and flooding, and sporting clubs and fields were ruined.

However, during that extraordinary time of emergency we saw the true spirit of Queenslanders. In Currumbin, our local Mud Army mobilised to help those whose homes had been inundated in Elanora and the community organisations that went under, such as the Tallebudgera Pony Club and the Tallebudgera Valley Football Club. I thank the member for Bonney, the shadow minister for the environment, for selflessly dropping everything to help me and the Currumbin community to clean up. Together we went door to door, loading up his ute and my trailer with flood-damaged carpet and furniture to help those most affected by the floods.

Once we got our locals back on their feet, we turned our attention to our New South Wales neighbours. While the damage in the Currumbin electorate was localised to particular parts of suburbs, we know that the damage in Northern New South Wales was catastrophic. I give a shout-out, in particular, to the Coolangatta branch of the Queensland Country Women's Association, the Coolangatta Surf Life Saving Club, Cornerstone Stores in Currumbin, the Currumbin RSL, a number of our local schools including Elanora State School and the Currumbin Community Special School, Southern Cross University, the Community Bank Tugun and Palm Beach Currumbin Junior AFL club. Those organisations and the people within them dropped everything to help those who needed it most, rallying volunteers and organising collection points. I am so proud of the efforts of our beautiful community—efforts that are ongoing as I speak.

Now that the clean-up and help are underway, it is time to look at preparation for future floods. I have been contacted by several constituents who are extremely concerned that the ongoing M1 roadworks may have contributed to the flooding of their roads and homes in and around Elanora. One local wrote to me saying—

We believe the Flood Mitigation Channel was being used to store gravel and rocks from the construction on the M1 and this in turn caused it to block.

Another resident summarised their concerns as follows—

All the area from Guineas Creek Road to the 19th Avenue shops was flooded. We have lived here for 24 years and it has never looked like this, so something has caused this to happen. The M1 has been raised higher than surrounding houses on the western side of it—could that have had something to do with it? Or was there a blockage in the creek around Schuster Park?

I have raised these concerns with the government directly. I was disappointed in the response that I received from the minister as the terms of reference for the flood review, which was announced yesterday, are narrow and do not address the causation concerns of my community. This is not the transparent review that my constituents are calling for.

The review should also look at the government's disaster messaging. In a time of emergency, Queenslanders need clear and timely messages. Instead, what we heard from the Premier was mixed messaging about the closure of schools across the south-east corner and we had chaos as parents and teachers tried to interpret and act on the chaotic messaging. The blanket closure of all schools was not good leadership or good governance. We deserve a government that will listen to Queenslanders and properly, extensively and transparently review how the Queensland government prepared for and responded to the 2022 floods.

Currumbin constituents deserve to be informed of any contributing factors to the flooding of their homes, the flooding of their businesses and the destruction of their roads and infrastructure. Locals deserve the peace of mind that comes with knowing that everything possible will be done to prepare for future flooding events. That can only happen if our community is comprehensively included in the state government's review of the 2022 flood disaster. I am calling on the state government to ensure that the M1 roadworks are included in the review so that my community can get the answers they deserve.