



Speech By  
**Hon. Leeanne Enoch**

**MEMBER FOR ALGESTER**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 March 2022

**MOTION**

**Queensland Floods**

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts) (2.09 pm): I begin by expressing my sincere condolences and sympathies to those families impacted by this recent natural disaster including people in my own electorate of Algester and of course those right across the region and especially those families who are now mourning the loss of a loved one.

The Palaszczuk government puts people at the centre of everything we do. We take a person centred approach and we respond quickly and with compassion. This approach was on display as my department led the human and social recovery response to the recent South-East Queensland flood event. Within hours of the deluge, the Palaszczuk government moved swiftly to activate impacted areas in the Gympie and North Burnett regional council areas. I want to acknowledge those councils and others that requested those activations and worked so closely with the state government to get those activations happening. This enabled members of those communities to apply for grants, including jointly funded Commonwealth-state Personal Hardship Assistance Scheme grants from Sunday, 27 February.

As the storm system tracked south, activation of impacted regions followed with areas in the Lockyer Valley, Moreton Bay, Brisbane, Ipswich, Somerset, Gympie, Noosa and Logan local government areas being activated by 1 March and further areas including Redlands and Scenic Rim activated in the following days. As of this morning, there have been over 26,000 payments made to impacted Queenslanders, totalling more than \$11 million and benefiting 60,669 people. A key component of Queensland's world-class community recovery response is the standing up of community recovery hubs and pop-up hubs where government agencies work alongside our NGO partners to deliver impacted communities financial assistance as well as vital emotional support including crisis counselling.

The Palaszczuk government moved quickly, with community recovery hubs opening in Gympie, Redcliffe and Caboolture by Thursday, 3 March. We had more than 20 community recovery hubs and pop-up hubs open across the south-east, supporting individuals and families across the flood-affected areas. Over the past couple of weeks I have witnessed the important work being done in hubs across the south-east: at Beenleigh and Palm Beach to the south, Ipswich and Laidley to the west, across the river in South Brisbane, and in Caboolture and Gympie to the north. I want to pause and acknowledge the member for Gympie for taking my call the day that I was able to visit the Gympie recovery hub and for sharing some really valuable information about how we can assist people in his region. I also acknowledge the member for Ipswich, who accompanied me on my visit to the Ipswich community recovery hub.

I have been particularly moved by the commitment of staff, volunteers and the almost 300 ready reservists from across the Queensland Public Service who volunteered their time to support their fellow Queenslanders. I also thank all community recovery and housing employees from the Department of

Communities, Housing and Digital Economy who have gone above and beyond. I heard from many of our housing employees of the challenges they encountered in finding emergency accommodation for so many in an already tight housing market. Given these challenges, within a week of the flooding event I convened the emergency housing security meeting with key housing stakeholders, including QCOSS, Q Shelter, REIQ, Tenants Queensland, the RTA and the residential parks association. We discussed immediate housing challenges in response to the flood and the best next steps, discussions that will continue during this heightened recovery period. I also announced a \$600,000 rapid response fund for specialist homelessness services, enabling existing services to tailor responses to those communities impacted. I also expanded the eligibility for bond loans and rental grants, easing pressure on private rentals for more Queenslanders.

Whether it is supplying emergency housing, planning longer term housing solutions or providing immediate financial relief, we have been supporting the people at the centre of this disaster. The Palaszczuk government has acted swiftly and compassionately to meet the housing needs of those impacted by the South-East Queensland floods. Sadly, this has been against a backdrop of a federal government that has abandoned its responsibilities to Queensland when it comes to housing and homelessness. The Morrison government has turned its back on Queenslanders by stripping nearly \$100 million from housing and homelessness funding to our state at a time of unprecedented pressure.

The Morrison LNP government has been the architect of declining funding for housing since 2016-17. They have abandoned the national partnership for remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing and the funding that goes with it. They have ceased the National Rental Affordability Scheme, leaving over 10,000 Queenslanders paying more rent or having to find alternative housing into the future. They have refused to forgive Queensland's historic housing debt, unlike what they have done for Tasmania and South Australia.

We are working hard to make sure that Queenslanders recover from these floods. We know there will still be a great deal of work to be done, but we need the federal government to step in with us. We will continue to fight hard for Queenslanders.