




Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR MILLER

Record of Proceedings, 15 March 2022

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Floods, Road and Rail Infrastructure

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.09 am): Queenslanders have endured a lot—years of COVID and now floods since the last sitting of this House. It is the second major flood event for the south-east in 11 years and the second flooding of Maryborough in one month and one that has had a devastating impact on our road network.

On Friday, 25 February, the Bruce Highway was cut in multiple places. On 28 February, we saw over 1,000 roads closed and the Brisbane River later peaked at 3.85 metres. The Mary River at Gympie exceeded the peak of 1999. It was a year's worth of rain in a few days—the most rain in a three-day or seven-day period since records began in 1840. It overwhelmed our rivers and waterways. It swallowed our roads and rail, people's houses and businesses, cutting off communities and leaving them isolated. Boats and kayaks replaced cars for transport in many locations, including in my own electorate of Miller, where people in Fairfield, Chelmer, Graceville and Sherwood were 'islanded' by the floodwaters.

Many areas copped it badly such as Bethania, Logan, Yeerongpilly, Graceville, Sherwood, Goodna, Yeronga, Chelmer, Oxley, Rocklea, Bundamba and Windsor, to name but a few. From the Wide Bay to Toowoomba to the border, the rain just did not stop. Major arterials were cut off—the Ipswich and Centenary motorways, the Bruce Highway, the Warrego Highway, the D'Aguilar Highway, the Bremer River bridge—and 10 bridges across Logan, Gold Coast and Scenic Rim were all heavily affected with large sections submerged and damaged. The Palaszczuk government stepped up. Our hardworking frontline workers were out doing the heavy lifting, keeping Queenslanders safe, rebuilding and repairing our network and getting us moving again. We cannot thank them enough.

Transport and Main Roads conducted 188 bridge safety inspections before reopening them all safely. Our south-west crews delivered 194 tonnes of plant mix for pothole repairs to keep freight flowing inland when the M1 was closed in New South Wales. Last week I was out at Chuwar with the member for Ipswich West where we met with TMR inspector John who led a work crew through the night to get bridges like Colleges Crossing open for the community as soon as floodwaters receded. I thank John and all of our frontline workers across Queensland for their incredible efforts.

The Palaszczuk government is proud and committed to protecting and standing by Queenslanders in a time of crisis and to get them back on their feet after natural disasters strike. We did this straight away by removing tolls from our major roads like the Airportlink Tunnel and the Gateway Motorway to help the recovery and by making public transport free to assist with the clean-up effort.

It is regrettable and unjust that Queensland flood victims will only receive one-third of the financial assistance that flood victims will receive just across the border in the federal coalition-held seat of Page. They will get three \$1,000 payments while Queensland flood victims will only get one \$1,000 payment from the Commonwealth. This is a disgrace and is utterly indefensible by the Morrison government.

Now we are getting on with major repairs, as well as delivering more resilient roads through our record \$27.5 billion transport plan. The Palaszczuk government does this because the health and safety of Queenslanders are our priority. We stood by Queenslanders to beat COVID, and we will stand by them now and into the future.