




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

Record of Proceedings, 16 March 2022

MOTION

Queensland Floods

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (3.11 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the motion. It has been absolutely devastating to see the damage and destruction inflicted right across South-East Queensland. I, along with all members of this House, extend my condolences and deepest sympathies to the friends and family who lost loved ones as a result of this natural disaster. My heart also goes out to all Queenslanders who have lost their homes, property and personal possessions.

In my electorate of Waterford, it seems like only yesterday that we were battling the 2017 floods. It is heartbreaking to see us back in this situation so soon. But it is also incredibly heartwarming to see Logan's community spirit in full swing. My electorate office has become a hub for people coming and going, dropping off food and supplies for those in need—locals like Wally and Anne who donated trays of fruit and other supplies; Bren and Justine who donated fresh pillows and blankets; and the wonderful Louie Naumovski from the Logan House Fire Support Network. They have all demonstrated the enormous heart of Logan City. It is not just Logan. We know all Queenslanders have been looking out for one another and giving generously to those in need.

Disappointingly, we also know that fake charities and fundraisers often pop up in the wake of disasters and take advantage of this generosity. I take this opportunity to remind Queenslanders how important it is to do due diligence before donating money to charities and fundraisers. Any organisation that wishes to publicly fundraise must be registered with the Office of Fair Trading. The OFT keeps a list of registered charities on its website. The OFT makes regular contact with organisations to ensure that they are complying with Queensland's legislation.

I was surprised when I was informed that the Office of Fair Trading had made contact with the starter of a GoFundMe page who was looking to raise money but was not compliant with Queensland legislation. I was most surprised to learn that this person was the federal member for Dickson, Peter Dutton. I understand Mr Dutton has now fixed his GoFundMe page to comply with state law, but it begs the question as to why this was ever a problem to begin with. Peter Dutton is one of the most powerful ministers in this country. If he chose to he could pick up the phone and ask Scott Morrison to make sure that his community had the funding they need to recover from the floods. Instead, he set up a GoFundMe page not in accordance with Queensland law.

It is not that there is not enough money to go around. Some \$5 billion is how much is currently sitting in the federal government's Emergency Response Fund, and barely a cent has been spent. What good is the Emergency Response Fund if it cannot be used to respond to emergencies? This money has garnered almost a billion dollars in interest and yet the federal LNP is withholding it from the people who need it most. Peter Dutton has the audacity to ask the community to fund the response.

Now, in my community of Waterford residents who have lost their homes are being told that they are not eligible for the same assistance that victims in New South Wales are eligible for. The fact that people in flood-affected Lismore are eligible for assistance payments whereas Queenslanders are not eligible for those same payments—thousands of dollars—is a slap in the face to Queenslanders who have lost everything and have had to, for over weeks now, stare at their entire possessions on the side of the road. People are coming by to look at everything they have owned completely trashed. Yet this Prime Minister thinks Queenslanders do not deserve the same as those in New South Wales. I am sure it had absolutely nothing to do with the fact that Lismore is held by the Nationals. The surrounding councils and shires in New South Wales did not get the funding and Queensland is certainly not getting the funding.

As the Deputy Premier made very clear in the House this morning, what have we heard from those opposite? Have those who represent seats and communities in Queensland that have been affected picked up the phone to urge their federal counterparts to make sure that Queenslanders who have suffered get the support they need? We have heard nothing. I have not heard one thing from a member of the opposition about standing up for Queenslanders who have been affected. Not one of them has asked their mates in Canberra—

Mr Powell: How do you know?

Ms FENTIMAN: I would love to hear it. I take the interjection from the Manager of Opposition Business: how do I know? I can only go on public comments. There have been no comments made on social media. If they have picked up the phone, good on them. Let us know about it. So far I have not heard a thing.

We on this side of the House are committed to helping Queenslanders. We will not throw our constituents under the bus like the Prime Minister.