




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BURNETT

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ADJOURNMENT

Bundaberg East Flood Levee

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (7.06 pm): Flood-proofing of Bundaberg is vital. It is important we get it right. It is time for all levels of government to come back to the table to get it right. Unfortunately, residents are extremely disappointed over the consultation process and constant delays with this project. It is evidenced by more than 5,000 signatures on a petition that is asking for a review of the original proposed flood mitigation, which I will table. I want to congratulate the Bundaberg Flood Protection Group. They simply state that the citizens of Bundaberg call on the state government and the Bundaberg Regional Council to review the Bundaberg East flood levee proposal and implement better protections.

Tabled paper: Nonconforming petition regarding the Bundaberg Regional Council East Bundaberg flood levee and flood protection measures to the Burnett River [176](#).

Clearly, the government has failed in its responsibility to communicate to all stakeholders and residents. Of the 5,000 signatures, 50 per cent claim to know very little or nothing about the proposed Bundaberg East flood levee, the wall's location or the effects. While the Bundaberg East levee would provide good mitigation options for those living in Central and East Bundaberg, there are numerous other options that should be not ruled out entirely.

The Bundaberg Flood Protection Group has been advocating for flood mitigation on a staged basis. This means that a 2013 sized event would have resulted in an eight-metre AHD flood at Targo Street gauge. One option is to restore the river as close as possible to its original state. The flood protection group investigation suggests that flood levels created by a simple rain event like 2013 could be a metre lower if we got on with the job.

The issues of Millaquin Bend have been talked about—and the people in Bundaberg will know what I am talking about—but we need to get on with the job to make sure consultation includes all the community and not leaving the vacuum that currently exists.

We were all promised a 10-year action plan in 2017. With poor consultation and a lack of options, we have now a single-minded view that does not include all of the people in Bundaberg in that decision-making process. On behalf of those 5,000 signatories, I think it is only reasonable that we come back to the table. I ask the government to reinvent or have the consultation processes that started a couple of years ago but remember that flood-proofing is a serious issue in Bundaberg. If handled correctly, we could save many lives and many properties. We need the best solution that is properly researched, investigated and discussed and for the options to be given at least some respect when they are being considered.

The government's bandaid approach to regional Queensland and this particular project has to stop. I say to all levels of government—this is not a shot at any one level: stop playing politics with our region, stop wasting taxpayers' money and stop the cover-ups on this project. We all deserve better in this space.

Again, as a reminder, in 2017 we were promised boots on the ground and a 10-year action plan. There is not long to go. More importantly, you cannot continue to leave the people of Bundaberg in a vacuum, particularly with something so serious. Every time it rains in Bundaberg, people still get really frightened and really apprehensive about what that means. We have an opportunity to get this right. I acknowledge the government's announcements prior to the 2020 election, but they have to talk to the feds and we have to get it done.