




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Floods

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure) (9.48 am): Since the House last sat, South-East Queensland, Wide Bay and the Fraser Coast have experienced catastrophic flooding that has now swept down the east coast of Australia. It hit us first and it hit us hard. Tragically, 13 Queenslanders lost their lives. Thousands of families have lost their homes. They are now living in emergency accommodation or are staying with family or friends. The floods also damaged businesses, farms, schools and sporting facilities from Maryborough, south to the Gold Coast and west to Toowoomba. In many areas, the devastation was worse than the 2011 floods 11 years ago.

Through all the rain, mud and tears, the Queensland spirit has shone through. I want to pay tribute to the disaster and emergency services staff who worked around the clock to keep Queenslanders safe. I thank our police, ambos, firies and their swiftwater rescue teams. I thank our energy workers and road workers who kept us safe during the floods and worked so hard to get the power back on and the roads open again. I especially acknowledge and thank our volunteer state emergency services, including Merryl Dray who lost her own life serving the Queensland community.

I want to thank the dam managers. They held back four Sydney Harbours worth of water from smashing its way through the city. As the skies cleared, we moved rapidly into clean-up and recovery—something Queensland is very experienced at. We have after all done it more than 90 times since 2011. We appointed Major General Jake Ellwood to lead the disaster recovery. I only met the major general a week ago, but I have been impressed with his genuine empathy and his quick problem-solving. I know he is determined not to work from an office. He wants to spend every day in the field visiting a flood affected community. He spent the weekend in Goodna, Bundamba, the Gold Coast and Ashgrove after visiting Gympie with me on Friday. We opened 23 community recovery hubs led by dynamos like Ariana from the department of communities whom I met in Gympie. She had barely slept, but the hub there was buzzing with staff and volunteers helping hundreds of people with whatever they needed.

The Palaszczuk government secured an initial \$558.5 million funding package to provide support to communities in need. In addition, we injected \$1 million into each of the 19 affected councils to assist with urgent clean-up works, and \$24 million of recovery funds have been advanced to the 14 most affected councils. Queensland's focus this past week has been to ensure the financial support is getting where it is most needed—people, families, small businesses and primary producers and also the not-for-profit organisations that are themselves supporting our communities.

Over the past week, personal hardship grants have been made available for more suburbs across the affected areas. The time frames have also been extended, giving people more time to apply. Some 620 small businesses and 70 primary producers have applied for recovery grants. QFES and QRA have now completed damage assessments across 22 local government areas. The data confirms the extent

of the damage: of nearly 16,500 assessments undertaken of homes and buildings nearly half have some level of impact, with 1,811 assessed as having severe levels of damage or totally destroyed; 2,548 with moderate damage; and 3,500 with minor levels of damage.

These floods came on top of an already intense summer disaster season with five prior natural disaster events already flooding much of Queensland since November last year. While the recovery has started, there is a long way to go. Queensland has the world's first standing disaster recovery authority in the Queensland Reconstruction Authority. The Palaszczuk government will ensure flood affected communities do not just build back but build back better like we did in 2011, 2015, 2017 and now 2022.