




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

Record of Proceedings, 17 March 2022

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Weather Monitoring

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure) (10.07 am): Yesterday I wrote to Senator Bridget McKenzie seeking priority funding from the Australian government to upgrade Queensland's rain gauge and warning network as part of the 2022-23 federal budget. The Palaszczuk government will share half the cost of the ongoing operations, maintenance and asset replacement of the flood warning system if the Commonwealth government invests in the upgrade of the network. It is essential that we upgrade more than 870 of the bureau's gauges from manual to automatic. This will ensure accurate, timely and consistent flood-warning information is being provided to the bureau and to our local communities.

The rain and river gauge network is critical to informing the Bureau of Meteorology's flood warnings to communities during flood events like those we have experienced this year. More than 80 per cent of Commonwealth owned gauges in Queensland are manually read. With the scale of flood events experienced by Queenslanders, it is vital that the Australian government invest in technological improvements in our flood-warning infrastructure. Queensland is undoubtedly the most disaster prone of all the states. Already this disaster season we are reeling from the effects of six disaster events which have flooded much of the state.

When the Morrison government called for grant applications as part of the first round of its national Flood Mitigation Infrastructure program, Queensland's application for \$14 million in funding to improve the state's flood-warning infrastructure network was declined. This funding would have gone towards infrastructure in the south-east corner of the state which has now experienced a flooding event comparable in scale to 2011.

The Australian government has announced a \$4 billion Emergency Response Fund to build resilience and reduce the risk of future natural disasters, but only \$50 million has been allocated nationally from the ERF and investment returns have seen the fund grow to \$4.8 billion. The Bureau of Meteorology, through its recent scoping study, identified options to address the shortfall in the current network, including a Commonwealth investment of \$161 million for capital uplift of the network. The Palaszczuk government is committed to working with the Commonwealth government to ensure Queensland has an appropriate flood warning infrastructure network in place, but we need the Australian government to invest in an upgraded system.