




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH

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MOTION

Queensland Floods

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (12.43 pm): If I really could distil what I saw in the last couple of weeks and bottle it, I would be a millionaire. It is called the Queensland spirit. It adorns the side of trains, it is on placards and billboards, but what I witnessed firsthand—along with every other member of this chamber—was nothing short of incredible. As an MP, I sometimes have people say to me they are concerned about their faith in society and the human spirit and where we are heading, but what we have all seen, particularly in South-East Queensland, Gympie and other parts of the state in the last fortnight has been nothing short of amazing. But it is no surprise. I can recall many years ago in 1974 seeing firsthand the floods in Brisbane, and of course back in 2011 I was part of the Mud Army, as many other members here would have been.

I am very proud to represent the eastern suburbs of Brisbane. Believe it or not, 2022 has been the worst by far. Floodwaters do not differentiate or discern the difference between little dotted lines on an electorate map. My electorate of Chatsworth was relatively unscathed. A couple of low-lying acreage areas flooded. I decided to help out wherever I could. I forgot about dotted lines, as any person would, and went across to Billan Street and Grey Street in the electorate of Bulimba. I acknowledge the work that the member for Bulimba did in her community. What I saw firsthand there replicated what we have seen in past floods, but the thing that struck me was the fact that—and members have commented on it—people who were not affected were driving around in their food vans, for example, and freely and willingly stopping and trying to help out the Mud Army and, most particularly, the people who were affected. It was simply amazing to see it on the display. One thing I would hope is that, whenever people are getting a little bit down about the way society is going, they speak to people who have been affected or got involved with what happened here recently.

I would also like to place on record my heartfelt condolence to the families and friends of the 13 souls who were tragically lost during the recent floods. I have to say that you meet people in this job—and, like the member for Everton, I am privileged to be coming up to 10 years—and you make a lot of friends in the community, around South-East Queensland and the whole of the state. When you do have people who get knocked down, you see the way they go about re-establishing their lives. There were countless examples in Billan Street where people were decimated, but when the call went out to lift heavy equipment they left work on their own properties to come across and help out other Queenslanders. It is truly magnificent.

In their five-minute contribution people will say what they want to in relation to criticisms and whatnot. I would like to focus on some of the teamwork I saw—for example, the local councillor in my part of the world, Councillor Lisa Atwood, and Ross Vasta MP, the federal member—people working hand in glove. In fact, I was working with someone whom I know handed out how-to-vote cards against me. There is a time and a place for that, but when it comes to Queenslanders in need no-one cares. Blue T-shirt, red T-shirt, green T-shirt, purple T-shirt—no-one cared. It was all about getting on with the job and trying to bring some relief.

I want to give a special shout-out to people in my own Chatsworth electorate. We did feel a bit of survivor guilt. We were relatively unscathed. But when the call went out for blankets, over 100 blankets arrived that morning at my electorate office which were immediately taken to the Chandler evacuation centre in the Sleeman Sports Complex. When the call went out for tinned food, we gave Woolworths and Coles Westfield a run for their money. We ran out of floor space in the electorate office. When the call went out, people responded. When we travel the world is it any wonder we get homesick, particularly if you come from this great state of Queensland. There is something that is distilled here. There is something about it. When that clarion call goes out 'We need a hand', people take cufflinks off and put T-shirts on. It makes no difference: when the call goes out for Queenslanders in need, Queenslanders will always be there.