



Speech By  
**Tim Nicholls**


**MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD**

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## MOTION

### Queensland Floods

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (12.53 pm): I wish to be associated with the many comments that have been made in this House acknowledging the 13 people who perished in the floods, storms and disasters that occurred in late February. I extend my condolences to all of those people affected by that loss of life. Whether they were serving in the SES and our emergency services or whether they were simply travelling home, any loss of life in a flood is unexpected and tragic for all of those involved. Like others, my heart goes out to them and we wish their families the very best in very tragic and sad circumstances.

I also wish to be associated with the comments that have been made on both sides of the House in respect of the great work that has been done by our emergency services crews, including the police. In my own electorate, the first message I got on Monday morning was from the officer in charge of the Hendra station. While he was out in his vehicle, I was out in mine and we were inspecting various parts of the electorate and comparing notes to see where the help was needed most. To them, I say thank you for your efforts. It is never easy and the calls continue to come in. Some of them might seem unreasonable, but we do not know that unless we are the person who is making that call because we have not experienced the floods in their shoes. Their house has been flooded, their possessions have been lost, they are staring at a sea of mud and are understandably distraught. Reasonableness and calmness are not things that we should expect in those circumstances.

Here in the south-east we live in a humid, tropical climate. One of the great benefits of living here in the south-east is that, whilst we experience hot and humid summers that we all may gripe about every now and then—and thank goodness for air conditioning—we also enjoy the benefits of magnificent autumn, spring and winter weather where things are much better. Our hot, humid summers bring with them the storms. It is almost legendary—perhaps even myth—that during summertime every afternoon you can set your clock by the time the thunderstorms come through. Well, the thunderstorms rolled through and they rolled through and they rolled through at the end of February.

It is no surprise in many instances that places in my electorate flooded. For the 45-plus years that I have been there, it has been a regular occurrence. But perhaps more than in the past, this February's rains and the resultant flooding took many more people by surprise. That was certainly one of the most prevalent comments that I heard—that people were taken by surprise. Clayfield was badly flooded. People perhaps think that all of Clayfield is sitting on top of the hill overlooking Kingsford Smith Drive, but in fact it is not. I will not say it was the worst affected or that we had it harder than other areas, because for anyone who was flooded and lost homes, loved ones, possessions, businesses and jobs, it was the worst thing they could have endured and comparisons are both meaningless and odious.

However, it is the worst level of flooding that I have seen in 45 years. Flood levels along Breakfast Creek from the Albion Fiveways to the famed Breakfast Creek Hotel were measured at almost twice the height of the 2011 flood. Only today we see reports that the Breakfast Creek Hotel is looking to

reopen later this week. They had hoped to open last week but unfortunately not. For those interested, during the flood aftermath it was reported to me that a bull shark was seen swimming in the carpark of the Breakfast Creek Hotel. Whether he was after a beer off the wood or a rib fillet medium-rare, we are not sure but he seems to have evacuated the scene. Thank goodness.

Businesses like coffee roasters were flooded—including the famous Fonzie Abbott, who you would know if you go to the airport. They were flooded through to two metres. They were resilient though and bounced back. On the Monday morning Dan Pappas said, 'Tim, we know it's going to flood. We've had our gear up. We were out of the floodwaters. We just want to start operating again.' In fact he was delivering beers and pizzas to local businesses in the area that Monday night, helping them rebuild. There are terrific stories like that.

Through Downey Park and the Northey Street farm and surrounds, cars were under water. Anyone who knows netball knows Downey Park. Enoggera Creek flowed through there—well, it did not flow through; it muscled and shouldered its way all the way through that part of the world in areas of Windsor, around the back and then through Toombul Shopping Centre, which is still closed. It is Brisbane's first shopping centre, opening in 1967, but it looks likely to be closed for many months. It is not in my electorate—it is in the member for Nudgee's electorate—but it is right next door to mine. The water then went all the way through Clayfield, with Aviation High being destroyed as well.

Many things have been said. There is a great deal of resilience. There will be a lot to be learnt from this—whether it is around the messaging, whether it is around resilience or whether it is around betterment. Not only should we be looking to thank those who served; we should be looking at how we can do better in the future.