




Speech By
Jim McDonald

MEMBER FOR LOCKYER

Record of Proceedings, 14 November 2023

ADJOURNMENT

Lockyer Electorate, Natural Disasters

 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (7.13 pm): It is a privilege to stand and speak tonight on behalf of my community, which is feeling terrible loss. Last Friday night a freak hailstorm hit the Lockyer and many people were injured; one lady lost her life. Our thoughts and love go out to Colin Greenwood and his family on the loss of Joy. The devastation of that storm saw \$50 million worth of damage—\$30 million worth of crops and \$20 million worth of infrastructure. There was so much havoc that night. I pay tribute to the first responders and the wonderful leadership shown by the Lockyer Valley Growers and the Lockyer council in responding to that storm. That storm means there are 10 to 12 weeks of lost income for our farmers. That lost income means workers are out of jobs. There are now hundreds of workers out of work in the Lockyer. That means families will go hungry, and that means people will leave and shops will struggle. The government needs to assist us in these times. There is such a feeling in our community of being left isolated, but the destruction that occurred across the Lockyer is something you would not be able to appreciate unless you were there. Crops were absolutely flattened by the hail.

We are calling on the government to provide assistance in the form of waiving the state levy through the environment department. I recognise that the Lockyer council has already done that with dump fees and other costs for farmers to make it easier with the clean-up. I call on the minister for agriculture to quickly get the assessments done so we can get assistance from the federal government through the Deputy Premier's office. Again I call on the Deputy Premier's office to see that this is addressed quickly so we are not waiting weeks for assistance.

Whilst I am addressing that matter, there is a review happening at the moment in terms of support from the Commonwealth. I call on the Deputy Premier to seek assistance to unlock the timely provision of assistance for these disasters. It is very clear that what has happened is an absolute tragedy, but we need to make sure these solutions are scaleable, because at the moment a farmer with 40 acres gets the same as a farmer with 400 acres and some get none. The system must also consider the compounding effects of events that have happened in the Lockyer. We have gone through years of drought and then floods in three years—one flood, a clear year and another flood—and now this storm in terrible trading conditions. Our farmers are on their knees, and I plead with this government and the federal government to urgently give us timely assistance so we can get back on our feet again and feed the nation, which the farmers of the Lockyer proudly do.