




Speech By
Stephen Bennett

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

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ADJOURNMENT

Bundaberg Floods, Anniversary

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (7.07 pm): Last month was the 10th anniversary of the Bundaberg floods. In January 2013 a record 9.5-metre flood ripped through the town, leaving a trail of destruction and despair. Quick-rising waters tore homes apart, cut off evacuation routes and stranded people and pets on their roofs. We were left with horrific memories but memories of mateship and resilience. I remember the immense courage and generosity when the Bundaberg community banded together to rebuild. People came from everywhere to clear the mud, wash the clothes, make the sandwiches and generally support the community. The power of the water was immense but the power of the people was even stronger.

Last month I hosted a morning tea to thank those involved in the recovery and it was a chance to reflect on and thank those incredible people who helped to put the pieces back together. From police, fire, ambulance crews to the Red Cross, Salvos and our SES, our local groups and organisations went above and beyond to help. There are so many people who put the needs of others above their own—a true display of solidarity and friendship. Our local councils, local media and emergency services had some harrowing days, but together we pushed through and recovered. I again want to give a big thank you to all who were involved in the rescue and recovery efforts. Your help, your assistance and your actions will never be forgotten.

This flood and weather system damaged 3,000 properties, 600 businesses and 7,000 people were evacuated—the biggest evacuation in Australia's history after Darwin. The LNP made it our priority to not only ensure people received assistance as effectively and as quickly as possible but immediately started to build resilience directly after the flood. The then LNP government invested \$2.4 million for two new flood levees, \$1.5 million for major stabilisation works, \$2.2 million for sporting and recreation clubs and more than \$63 million in financial assistance for primary producers and small businesses, all in a couple of months.

Just to name a few things the LNP did back in those days: \$486 million for recovery works went out to tender; \$900 million in transport recovery works in partnership with the federal government; \$4.2 billion in the 2013-14 budget to rebuild Queensland and \$9.3 billion for reconstruction over three years; \$2.4 million for two new flood levees; \$300,000 to the council for flood warning systems and another \$150,000 to install river stations.

The reason for tonight is to call for action. Ten years after the floods we still do not have a mitigation strategy. It is complex, I acknowledge that. It needs a lot more work. Ten years after we were promised boots on the ground we still have not seen mitigation projects. We still cannot agree on what our community needs, wants or deserves. I think it is time that we put a decade of broken promises to bed, we get on with the job and make sure that Bundaberg gets the few mitigation projects it was promised. The work and engineering has been done. The commitment is there. It is up to all levels of government to step up and make sure that the Bundaberg and broader community get those projects.

I draw an analogy with last year's Brisbane floods. We are already buying back homes. We are spending a lot of money in Brisbane on flood resilience works. I think the bush deserves better. Whether it is Bundaberg, Maryborough or Gympie, we deserve our fair share to make sure our communities are the best places to live and raise our families and that includes future flood mitigation works. Let us get on with the job.