




Speech By
Hon. David Crisafulli

MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

South-East Queensland Weather Events, Recovery

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Premier and Minister for Veterans) (2.04 pm): Queenslanders are no strangers to natural disasters. In recent months we have seen a cyclone and significant flooding impact Queenslanders from both ends of the state. It has been six weeks since the flooding events that hit our north and Far North. We never expected an historic weather event to hit the south-east only weeks later. Our focus now is on recovery and on making sure there is no daylight between the response and that recovery. Together, we will get Queensland back on its feet. This is an incredibly challenging time for many. That is why, in the wake of both disasters, we quickly mobilised our Community Recovery Hubs. There are already 13 hubs open in South-East Queensland to provide face-to-face support to those in need. More are on the way.

Queenslanders are resilient, but that does not mean they should face this alone—we will be there every step of the way. As we turn to recovery, we are working hard to make sure that we build resilience and we build back stronger. When we rebuild stronger and smarter, we reduce the risk for future events, reduce the risk for government, for community groups and for individuals. That is why we announced the Stronger Homes Grant to build more resilience in North and Far North Queensland. Importantly, these grants help home owners stay in their homes, stay in the community and reduce the risk of future damage. Applications are now open to provide funding for raising switchboards and hot water systems, or replacing plasterboard with something more resilient and replacing flooring—from carpets to tiles. I can inform the House that over 300 expressions of interest have already been lodged with this program.

This morning I was able to visit Ingham with the member for Hinchinbrook, where I saw firsthand the value this will bring to people picking up the pieces after this event. But recovery is not just about helping people to rebuild their homes; we also want to see our community sporting clubs back on their feet. Sporting clubs are the backbone of our communities and we have financial support available to help assess and repair damage. Recovery will require our beaches and our tourist hotspots to rebuild. We want everyone to know that Queensland is open for business. We are also focused on the resilience of our vital infrastructure like bridges and roads to keep our community safe, connected and supplied in times of crises—not doing the same thing to the same standard and expecting a different result.

At both ends of the state, the recovery phase will be led by our State Disaster Recovery Coordinators. Today I announce retired Colonel Justin O'Connor has been appointed to the role of State Disaster Recovery Coordinator to lead the recovery effort in the south-east. Justin spent several decades in the Australian Army, where he rose through the ranks to become a senior officer with several postings throughout Queensland. His experience as a former chief executive of the Queensland Hotels Association will be invaluable as we welcome tourists back to the south-east.

I can also announce former councillor Peter Matic as the Deputy State Disaster Recovery Coordinator. Engaging with local governments is a key part of recovery and Peter's 16 years as a local councillor in Brisbane through several flood events, as well as his experience with the LGAQ and the Logan City Council, will serve our state well. Together they will provide leadership, coordination and advice for the recovery efforts in impacted communities following the impact of Tropical Cyclone Alfred.

There is no doubt that recovery can be complex. It is going to take time, but we will see the job through. While disaster impacts vary from community to community, our commitment to helping every Queenslanders through recovery remains the same. We stand by all Queenslanders who are suffering the devastating impacts of these disaster events and together we will keep working every day to see the recovery through.