




Speech By
Hon. Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Weather Events, Recovery

 **Hon. RM BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (Minister for Finance, Trade, Employment and Training) (2.35 pm): I rise to address the significant financial repercussions of ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred and our ongoing recovery efforts. This unprecedented event has severely impacted our communities, but our resilience and collective response are paving the way to recovery. The cyclone's aftermath left over 58,000 homes and businesses without power, particularly in the Gold Coast and Redlands areas. This disruption extended to water supply, as many households rely on electric pumps for tank or bore water. Some residents are expected to remain without electricity until Saturday, underscoring the urgency of our restoration efforts.

Just this morning I was back travelling across my electorate of Mudgeeraba, visiting Numinbah Valley, Springbrook and Bonogin. I spent time talking to residents and business owners, reassuring them that we have their back as the recovery continues. The sheer scale of this damage reinforces the importance of strengthening our infrastructure and improving emergency response systems to minimise the economic burden on affected families and businesses in future disasters.

In response, both federal and state governments have activated financial assistance programs. Eligible residents in affected areas, including Brisbane, Fraser Coast, Gold Coast, and many others now, can access grants to cover emergency costs, replace damaged household goods and assist with the reconnection of essential services. However, we must ensure that these relief efforts are distributed efficiently and reach those most in need without unnecessary bureaucratic delays.

The insurance sector is also grappling with the aftermath. As of midday Wednesday, approximately 34,000 claims have been filed—predominantly from Queensland—covering damage to homes, vehicles and businesses. Insurers have already disbursed nearly \$2.4 million in emergency payments to address immediate needs such as food and temporary shelter. These payouts offer a lifeline for many, yet we must remain vigilant in ensuring that claims are processed fairly and swiftly so that families and businesses can begin rebuilding without undue stress or financial strain. The Insurance Council of Australia has declared an insurance catastrophe, with anticipated payouts exceeding \$2 billion.

To support those who have lost income due to the cyclone, the Disaster Recovery Allowance has been made available. This short-term payment assists individuals directly affected by the disaster, providing financial relief during this challenging period. However, we must also consider additional long-term economic support, such as concessional recovery loans for small businesses and primary producers, to prevent long-term economic hardship in our hardest hit communities. As we move forward, it is imperative to remain vigilant against potential exploitation.

The Insurance Council of Australia has warned about 'disaster chasers'—unscrupulous operators offering repair services that may invalidate insurance claims. Residents are advised to engage only with reputable contractors to ensure the integrity of their insurance coverage. We must also ensure that consumer protection agencies and local authorities are empowered to crack down on fraudulent operators looking to take advantage of vulnerable residents during this crisis.

The road to recovery is challenging, but with coordinated efforts from all levels of government, the private sector and our resilient communities we will rebuild and emerge stronger from this disaster. By investing in infrastructure resilience, we can turn this moment of hardship into an opportunity to create a safer and more secure future for all Queenslanders.

Finally, I wanted to pass on my heartfelt thanks to First Officer Philip Foster of the Bonogin Rural Fire Brigade and his crew, whom I caught up with today on the side of the road, for their incredible commitment to helping people recover from the biggest weather event we have had in recent memory. I thank the Treasurer and Minister for Energy. I understand that Energex crews are finally on their way to Bonogin. There are many live wires still there. I encourage residents not to drive over or under them. Help is on its way. As the clean-up continues, please remember: if you are in the area driving around, listen to the local authorities and avoid driving near fallen powerlines.