




Speech By
Hon. Samuel O'Connor

MEMBER FOR BONNEY

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

North Queensland, Weather Events

 **Hon. ST O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Youth) (10.04 am): The people of North Queensland are tough, they are resilient and they are always ready to help their mates in times of adversity. We have seen that spirit on full display, once again, as communities rally together to get back on their feet after this devastating weather event. But some challenges are just too big to face alone, and that is where government must step in.

I spent a few days making my way around flood impacted communities across North Queensland. From Townsville to Palm Island, to Cardwell and to the ground zero of the devastation—Ingham—I saw the outstanding response efforts firsthand. I met again with Mayor Alf Lacey of Palm Island and with Mayor Teresa Millwood of the Cassowary Coast Regional Council to listen to their community's needs and ensure our response is targeted and effective. In Cardwell, alongside Mayor Millwood, I had the great privilege of welcoming the Chinook helicopter which was delivering essential goods to that isolated community. This was a powerful example of cooperation in action. I sincerely thank the Australian Defence Force for their outstanding efforts in partnering with the Queensland government and the Cassowary Coast Regional Council to make this delivery possible.

Our message to everyone who is impacted is clear: if your home has been damaged or destroyed, we can help whether you are a renter, a home owner or if you are living in social housing. Right now we have more than 137 housing and QBuild staff on the ground across the affected regions working day and night to get people safe, secure and back on track. So far, we have provided temporary accommodation for over 180 people, and we stand ready to help. Our QBuild crews have completed over 231 rapid damage assessments and we are working through 873 maintenance requests for Queensland government assets—mostly roof leaks, ceiling repairs and clearing debris. Our critical response teams are out in the community going door to door, meeting people where they are and offering practical support.

I cannot overstate how impressed I was with the dedication of our housing and QBuild staff—both from the local area and from across Queensland. Whether it be in recovery hubs, housing service centres or out on site doing urgent repairs, their hard work and compassion are making a real difference. To everyone in North Queensland: we are with you in the long haul; we will stay with you until the job is done. That is why we continue to partner with the Queensland disaster recovery partners like Givit, the Red Cross and St Vincent de Paul that will work with us over the entire recovery process so that when people can return to their homes they are supported with the whitegoods, the furniture, the school and work supplies that they need to rebuild their homes and their lives.

If your home has been impacted, do not hesitate. We can help you with a place to stay in the short term; we can help you to get back into your home; we can help you financially through payments and grants; and we can help you get food, clothing or essential items. I urge anyone who needs help in North Queensland to call us on 137468, to visit a recovery hub or your local housing service centre, or

go to qld.gov.au/housing. We will not simply rebuild what was lost; we will rebuild better and stronger. Every disaster represents an opportunity to ensure we do not reconstruct the same infrastructure to the same standard in the same location and expect a different result. We are committed to embedding resilience and betterment into everything we do, particularly in housing. That means delivering homes that are more flood resilient. North Queenslanders are no strangers to challenges and, with this support, we will get through this, as we always do—together.