




Speech By  
**Hon. Samuel O'Connor**  
**MEMBER FOR BONNEY**

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Record of Proceedings, 12 March 2025

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **South-East Queensland, Weather Events**

 **Hon. ST O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Youth) (10.15 am): Queenslanders have once again shown remarkable resilience in the face of a natural disaster. Just last month we were standing up with North Queenslanders through devastating floods and today we stand with the communities of South-East Queensland, the Lockyer Valley and the Wide Bay as they recover from the impacts of Tropical Cyclone Alfred.

From the moment Alfred approached our coastline, the Crisafulli government kept Queenslanders well informed and encouraged councils and communities to get prepared. As the cyclone crept closer, Queenslanders came together to prepare for its impact. This included my department's housing and QBuild teams. Housing sent emergency messages to our social housing tenants to help with their preparedness activities and to provide support when needed. We arranged for housing staff volunteers from outside SEQ to be deployed to assist with the housing recovery response.

The number of housing officers on the ground was ramped up in the days before the cyclone hit, conducting outreach across South-East Queensland. Over 50 staff engaged with rough sleepers at over 80 locations across the south-east in those few days before the cyclone. They secured a safe refuge for 57 people in temporary emergency accommodation—basically everyone who was offered it accepted it.

I had the privilege of joining our housing officers Zac and Lana and Selina, our HSC manager from the Gold Coast, in hotspots across our city, seeing the incredible work they were doing to support these vulnerable Queenslanders. We worked closely with local councils, our state funded specialist homelessness services and community organisations to ensure the at-risk individuals were receiving the housing support they needed.

We had 43 housing staff deployed across evacuation and recovery centres, ensuring Queenslanders could access housing support as they began to rebuild their lives. Our housing service centres kept operating under emergency conditions. Staff assessed risks, they ensured service continuity and reopened physically quickly after the worst had passed. The recovery effort is now in full swing and our priority remains ensuring that every Queenslanders impacted by this disaster has a safe place to stay and a pathway forward.

QBuild has deployed 112 staff to conduct rapid damage assessments. Our first priority has been schools, ensuring children can return to classrooms safely and supporting principals to make the decision to reopen their school. As at a 10 am update from my director-general, 310 of the 382 damage assessments of schools have been completed since Sunday—that is over 80 per cent—and every single one requested by Education will be completed by the end of today.

Social housing properties are also being assessed to identify and action urgent repairs and long-term reconstruction needs. Emergency accommodation remains available, with almost 1,800 hotel rooms ready to book, if needed, across Brisbane, the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast for those who are unable to return home. We continue working closely with local councils, our state funded specialist homelessness services and community groups to ensure affected individuals receive not only housing support but also social and financial assistance.

While our Energex and Ergon Energy crews work to restore power, we continue prioritising vulnerable residents, especially our social housing tenants. Community recovery hubs are coordinating with QBuild, local councils and emergency services to ensure a smooth transition from temporary accommodation to stable housing solutions. The Crisafulli government is committed to supporting affected communities through every step of the recovery process. Our housing service centres will continue outreach efforts, ensuring all those who need assistance will receive it.

I want to thank every Queenslander who stepped up to help their neighbours, particularly our hardworking housing and public works staff for the outstanding job they did. My message to those impacted is the same as last month's message to North Queenslanders: if your home has been damaged or destroyed, we are here to help. This applies to home owners, renters and those in social housing. Together we will recover, rebuild and ensure more Queenslanders have a place to call home.