




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR GREGORY

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Western Queensland, Weather Events

 **Mr DILLON** (Gregory—LNP) (2.31 pm): Today I rise with a heavy heart to speak about the current devastating floods in Western Queensland. I wish to share with this House, for the benefit of all, the deeply moving words of one of our fellow Queenslanders whose words reflect the profound emotional toll of these floods. They were, in part, shared yesterday by the *Courier-Mail*. Unashamedly these are the direct thoughts and emotions of Adavale resident Emily Green, used with her permission—

I always thought grief was pretty straightforward.

Reserved only for the mourning of the loss of family members, friends and pets.

Relationships, friendships, life stages even.

I didn't realise you could feel such immense grief for innate objects and moments in time.

Grief for the places that felt like home, smells and sights that transported you back to alternate realities.

The thousands of cows, horses, kangaroos, lizards and birds that survived the driest of times and now won't make it to see the green grass growing.

Camp kitchens that lured long-faced and baggy-eyed crew in with its aromas of bacon and eggs each sunrise.

Fuel bowsers that we leant on each morning, weary eyed and exhausted from the days gone and the days yet to come.

Avgas drums that once sat full and ready to be emptied into the bellies of thirsty choppers, the smell of it seeping into your shirt sleeves.

Shed walls that housed endless arguments, late-night repair jobs and ever-changing plans for the day unfolding.

Vehicles that safely carried our babies, ringers, truckies and the boss alike over kilometres of mulga and drought-stricken land.

Trucks that tackled treacherous terrain, delivering breeders to calve out and grow the operation year by year.

Building on the legacies of the generations gone before us.

Helicopters that became our eyes in the sky, from guiding first year ringers through their first muster to carefully casting eyes over growing concerns of dwindling feed and struggling stock.

Motorbikes determined to buck even the most talented rider off at any given moment, and afternoons spent idling along the tail of a mob...

Welcome mats and front doorsteps that greeted friends, family and colleagues with open and inviting arms, toddler's first footsteps and hungry horses waiting at the gate for a carrot.

Living room floors where children played and bickered, kitchen benches once covered in flour from a fresh batch of scones for the freezing mustering crew to warm their bellies with...

And that same damned gutter that you had to drop back to first gear for.

Every...time.

All of it gone.

The water came and went, washing away every milestone, memory and moment in its wake.

Leaving behind inches of mud and miles of destruction.

Shaking even the sturdiest and strongest of mindsets.

The flood, like an unfamiliar and ferocious monster of the river beds managed to wrap its ugly tentacles around every community, township and station in its path.

Pulling them under and dragging them into the depths of raging water with incredible force.

As the water begins to recede and the boneyards of our communities and homes emerge from the earth, good-intentioned people offer words of encouragement.

'All replaceable', they say. 'At least your family are safe', they say.

And while this is truthful and obviously the indisputable positive to derive from a dire situation, the reality is that no, not all of the victims to this water are replaceable.

And while yes, my family and the broader community are safe and dry and for that I'm eternally grateful, we are allowed to feel the sting of the chaos left behind.

We should be able to express our despair for the loss of objects and items that shaped our lives.

We can recognise and mourn the loss of the livestock that we spent our lives caring for.

Repairable? Yes.

Fixable? Mostly.

Replaceable? Never.

Day to day routines became memories overnight.

Favourite belongings now muddied and mouldy.

Multi-millions of dollars worth of improvements, infrastructure and livestock swept up and discarded like scrap metal and rubbish.

And the financial burden yet to even materialise and rear its repugnant head.

The heartbreak for the hundreds of years of graziers hard work poured into the land gone before me.

The realisation of the significant rebuilding, finances and effort that has to eventuate to ensure stability for the futures of our next generation...

The torment of remembering the stock that we couldn't protect and their final moments before succumbing to Mother Nature herself.

She's a powerful lady, and this event has shown our nation what she is capable of.

What she gives, she can just as soon take away.

Our Western Queenslanders are begging her now to give us a break.

We know we asked for some rain ol' girl,

And we don't want to sound ungrateful,

But you couldn't have gone a bit easier on us Mother Nature?

Members, Emily Green.