



Speech By
Sean Dillon
MEMBER FOR GREGORY

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PRIVATE MEMBER STATEMENT

Gregory Electorate

 **Mr DILLON** (Gregory—LNP) (2.22 pm): Last month we saw further evidence of the Crisafulli government's ability and intention to continue delivering for Queensland. When Community Cabinet came to my electorate, the ministry arrived with open ears as well as significant announcements. For over a decade, residents of the Central Highlands have been without the attention and opportunity to truly access ministers and key decision-makers. Labor not only took the regions for granted, they found it too inconvenient to travel as a group to Emerald and listen to the needs of a region that is a huge contributor to our state's economy.

Roads in the region, as I have stated many times already in my short time in this place, have been underfunded for too long. The Crisafulli government's signature Country Roads Connect Program will see an investment of \$100 million in regional road-sealing projects with over \$20 million of this on key roads in and around the Gregory electorate, roads such as the Wyntoon-Springton Road, the Richmond Winton Road and the Diamantina Developmental Road will benefit from completed sealing works, along with a neighbouring road on the Bowen Developmental Road. This will be of benefit not only to locals and agriculture but also to tourism and interstate freight movements. I commend Minister Mickelberg for his ability to see this program initiated and now delivered. It is examples such as this that show the contrast between our minister who understands catalytic investments and the conga line of former ministers from the other side who overlooked and failed the bush when it came to infrastructure upgrades.

Social housing is a massive issue in so many corners of the state. Whilst in Emerald, Minister O'Connor was able to announce that construction will commence on the single biggest housing project in my electorate—a multi-storey social housing project that, when constructed, will provide permanent accommodation for almost half the current waiting list, taking our most vulnerable residents and providing a permanent solution that addresses their needs, and values their ability to remain in the community with dignity and quality of life. Minister O'Connor's approach has been a breath of fresh air and is providing real hope to the most vulnerable residents of the Central Highlands. On their behalf, Minister, I thank you.

I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution of \$4.5 million in additional funding which was announced yesterday by Minister Perrett to combat locusts. This is on top of the \$1 million which was jointly announced with the Commonwealth and State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, and will deal with locusts in the disaster activated areas, including Winton, Barcaldine and Longreach, especially concentrating on the areas around Muttaborra and Aramac. We have already seen today a re-emergence of the second wave of these locusts. They now attack valuable pasture and threaten significant crops in the Central Highlands and also in the North West Minerals Province. These locusts pose a real, clear and present danger to cropping and grazing in the area, and this is the first time that graziers in the Central West will have access to state support in terms of aerial spraying coordination and control. For that, we thank you, Minister Perrett.