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# MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**The 4674 meeting of the Brisbane City Council,**

**held via videoconference**

**on Tuesday 8 March 2022**

**at 6.45pm**

**Prepared by:**

**Council and Committee Liaison Office**

**Governance, Council and Committee Services**

**City Administration and Governance**

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## PRESENT:

The Right Honourable, the LORD MAYOR (Councillor Adrian SCHRINNER) – LNP

The Chair of Council, Councillor David McLACHLAN (Hamilton) – LNP

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| **LNP Councillors (and Wards)** | **ALP Councillors (and Wards)** |
| Krista ADAMS (Holland Park) (Deputy Mayor)  Greg ADERMANN (Pullenvale)  Adam ALLAN (Northgate)  Lisa ATWOOD (Doboy)  Fiona CUNNINGHAM (Coorparoo)  Tracy DAVIS (McDowall)  Fiona HAMMOND (Marchant)  Vicki HOWARD (Central)  Steven HUANG (MacGregor)  Sarah HUTTON (Jamboree)  Sandy LANDERS (Bracken Ridge)  James MACKAY (Walter Taylor)  Kim MARX (Runcorn)  Peter MATIC (Paddington)  Ryan MURPHY (Chandler)  Angela OWEN (Calamvale)  Steven TOOMEY (The Gap) (Deputy Chair of Council)  Andrew WINES (Enoggera) | Jared CASSIDY (Deagon) (The Leader of the Opposition)  Kara COOK (Morningside) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition)  Peter CUMMING (Wynnum Manly)  Steve GRIFFITHS (Moorooka)  Charles STRUNK (Forest Lake) |
| **Queensland Greens Councillor (and Ward)**  Jonathan SRI (The Gabba) |
| **Independent Councillor (and Ward)**  Nicole JOHNSTON (Tennyson) |

## OPENING OF MEETING:

The Chair, Councillor David McLACHLAN, opened the meeting with prayer and acknowledged the traditional custodians, and then proceeded with the business set out in the Agenda.

Chair: Please be seated.

I declare the meeting open.

Are there any apologies? No, I see no hands being raised. No apologies. Thank you, Councillors.

## QUESTION TIME:

Chair: Question Time.

Are there any questions of the LORD MAYOR or a Civic Cabinet Chair of any of the Standing Committees?

Councillor ADERMANN.

**Question 1**

Councillor ADERMANN: Oh, thank you, Chair. My question is to the LORD MAYOR.

LORD MAYOR, being able to make quick and impactful decisions during a disaster has been a key component of dealing with these floods. Could you please provide an update to the Chamber on the policies recently announced by the Schrinner Council as they relate to financial relief for Brisbane residents?

Chair: LORD MAYOR.

LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Mr Chair. Thank you, Mr Chair, and thank you, Councillor ADERMANN, for the question.

Obviously, I’ve referred to just the devastating nature of these floods earlier on in the meeting, but we know that not only is there an impact on property, there’s a significant emotional toll on people, significant financial toll, and that is very hard to quantify at this point in time. We know—we’ve heard reports of literally billions of dollars of damage across the State and we know that a significant portion of that will be properties in Brisbane contributing to that bill. One of the reasons why, really quickly, we moved to announce support for ratepayers in Brisbane that have been impacted by the floods.

Now, we estimate 28,000, potentially even 30,000 homes and businesses will be impacted by this flood or have been impacted by this flood and will be eligible for this $250 rebate that we’ve announced. In 2011, a similar program was introduced, but at that time it was $100 for impacted property owners. We wanted to make sure that we’ve provided as much support as possible as quickly as possible, and so, as Councillors would be aware, we’ve proposed a couple of things.

First of all, this $250 rebate, it reduces the average quarterly rate bill for property owners, for residential property owners from over $400 down to about $180 on average, so their next bill will be significantly lower than what they are used to receiving. The other thing is, the next bill will be delayed, as well, by a month. So instead of being sent out during April, it will be sent out during May. On top of that, we’re making sure that people get extra support in terms of extended payment terms.

So, the normal 30-day payment terms, people can request that to be extended significantly, and also, if they’re still having financial difficulties after those extended payment terms, they can ask for a payment plan to be set up. This is something that we did in terms of payment plans and extended payment terms during the COVID pandemic, and it’s something that was used by many people and appreciated, and we want to make this available for flood-impacted residents going forward.

So, this program, we have moved quickly together with the support for community groups of $5,000, but it is also, on top of that, part of our program which sees the parking meters remaining switched off. So, we did this in response to the COVID pandemic and the wave of Omicron that was in our community in January and February and asking for people to come out and support local businesses, come back into inner city areas to help activate the economy.

So, we switched those parking meters off in February, but they have then remained off ever since, and today, I confirm that we’ll be leaving them off until the end of March, as well, to support this recovery process. We also have our parking inspectors out doing other things. They are helping with the recovery. They’re certainly not out there enforcing meters or issuing tickets. Obviously, they’re still a limited resource. If there’s some safety issues that people need enforced, they will be doing that, but when it comes to a general parking enforcement, they are not doing that. They’re focused on other things at the moment.

So, these sort of initiatives are just things that we can do as a Council to support our community in a time of recovery. These initiatives, I think it’s important that we announce them quickly and get them going quickly, hence they’re coming through to this meeting now today for approval, and we’ll see the E&C (Establishment and Coordination Committee) report coming up shortly. So, Mr Chair, Councillor ADERMANN, we wanted to do the best we can as quickly as possible to support our community.

Obviously, we continue to be focused on the flood clean-up in terms of removing debris from across the city, and that work will continue, but obviously, this financial support is an important part of that approach, as well, just to support our residents and community of businesses in a time of need. Thank you, Mr Chair.

Chair: Thank you, LORD MAYOR.

Councillor JOHNSTON.

**Question 2**

Councillor JOHNSTON: Yes, my question is for the LORD MAYOR.

As people’s homes were flooding on Saturday night, 26 February, in Fairfield, Oxley, and Corinda, trapping them for days, why were you telling them to get sandbags or stay at home?

Chair: LORD MAYOR.

LORD MAYOR: Thank you for the question, Councillor JOHNSTON, and I also want to thank you for the way in which you’ve approached this natural disaster in terms of Council and the community and supporting your residents. I appreciate what you’ve been doing locally in your ward, and I mean that genuinely. It has been a challenge for all of us, but particularly your ward has once again, like it was in 2011, been very heavily hit, and I acknowledge that.

Now, when it comes to the information that was communicated out to the residents of Brisbane, what we had was a very quickly evolving situation.

So we had changing advice from the BOM (Bureau of Meteorology) and we did our best in short notice to actually feed that advice into our modelling, which obviously is a process that takes a bit of time, but we knew on Saturday evening that there was significant risk. This was, to put it in context, the same day—

*Councillor interjecting.*

Chair: Councillor JOHNSTON, you’ve asked your question. Allow it to be answered.

LORD MAYOR: Yes, this was the same day which the Premier had stood up earlier that day and encouraged people not to be alarmed. So, I am very proud of the fact that we were the first level of government out of the three, and I was the first political leader out of all of them to actually issue a genuine warning to the people of Brisbane that there was flooding happening. So, would we like to have got that information out sooner? Absolutely, absolutely.

I’ve said that repeatedly, but I know, based on the information that we got and the timelines that we had that we got it out as quickly as we possibly could in a rapidly changing environment. We also know that, when we put up that advice, it was criticised by some people as being alarmist, and in fact, certain senior members of the State Government were asking us to take that information down. So, this was not in any way a perfect—

Councillor JOHNSTON: Point of order, Mr Chair.

LORD MAYOR: —situation, but what we did is we made sure that when we got information and we were all—

Councillor JOHNSTON: Point of order, Mr Chair.

LORD MAYOR: —concerned that the information—

Chair: Councillor JOHNSTON, I can’t see your hand with the sandbag in front of your face. Are you making a point of order?

Councillor JOHNSTON: Yes, I am. I’m making a point of order. That’s what I was saying.

Chair: Well, you’ve got to put your hand up, too.

Councillor JOHNSTON: I did.

Chair: Yes, but you can’t see it because of your sandbag.

Councillor JOHNSTON: Oh, that’s very—well, you know, a lot of people couldn’t see much either out of their windows. It’s a relevant issue, Mr Chairman. My question was about flooding on Saturday night in Fairfield, Oxley, and Corinda. It was flooding on Saturday night, so why was the LORD MAYOR telling residents to get sandbags or stay at home?

Chair: The LORD MAYOR is answering the question.

LORD MAYOR.

LORD MAYOR: Yes, thank you, Mr Chair. There’s 190 suburbs in mainland Brisbane, and our information was a warning to people right across the city that, if flooding was expected—and as we know, that flooding was not limited to suburbs that were by the Brisbane River and it was certainly not limited to suburbs that were impacted by the 2011 flood. There was widespread flooding and flash flooding right across the city, in virtually every creek catchment of Brisbane, significant flooding, and it was flash flooding. It was flooding that came up extraordinarily quickly. So, there was flooding right across the city and it was flooding not caused by dam releases—

*Councillor interjecting.*

LORD MAYOR: —in the end, but caused by extremely heavy rain, unprecedented rain. So, we were communicating with as wide a group of people as possible, with messages in terms of be prepared for the flooding that is coming, but also letting them know some of the options and opportunities that were available to them, including sandbags. We continued to promote that sandbags were available right through the event because we kept on filling those sandbags up.

Each part of the city experienced different flooding at different times, but as I said, we were communicating to all 190 suburbs of the city, and each part of the city experienced different, I guess, localised flooding in this situation, but I again repeat, we made sure that we did the very best we could with the information that we had to get the message out as quickly as possible. I’ve talked before about the different alert systems that Council has, the weather zone system, which was operating all the way through in the lead-up to this flood event.

So, from the Thursday before the big weekend, messages were going out talking about flash flooding, and that continued Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, to all of our residents through the weather zone system. Then, as we’ve heard in the earlier Question Time today, the early alert system, which was not our system but made available to us, unfortunately took time.

Chair: Thank you, LORD MAYOR. Your time has expired.

Further questions?

Councillor HAMMOND: Thank you, Mr Chair.

Chair: Councillor HAMMOND.

**Question 3**

Councillor HAMMOND: Thank you. My question is to the Chair of the Transport Committee, Councillor MURPHY.

Councillor MURPHY, the recent rain and subsequent flooding caused havoc on our roads and our river. This had significant flow-on effects for the public transport network. Can you please provide an update to the Chamber on how the 2022 flood impacted Brisbane’s bus and ferry network, including providing a status update on services and assets as they are today?

Chair: Thank you.

Councillor MURPHY.

Councillor MURPHY: Yes, thanks very much, Chair, and thanks to Councillor HAMMOND for the question.

As I said in the previous meeting, during the flood, we experienced some significant disruptions to both the bus and the ferry network. Let me start with this disruption that was caused to the city’s buses. We had issues with the road network, as well as impacts to our bus depots and operator facilities, and all of that affected our ability to deliver bus services to Brisbane residents. These conditions made it unsafe for our drivers and our commuters to travel using the bus network.

There was widespread flooding and road closures, debris and damage to the road surface, and all of that forced the suspension of services from Sunday afternoon as the worst of the severe weather set in. However, I’m very pleased to say that, from the first service this morning, our bus services have returned to the full timetable. So that’s all of our routes now restored with regular timetabling which includes high-frequency and peak hour services. All of them are back up and running.

Now, this is an extraordinary achievement given the amount of work that was required to restore the network after one of Brisbane’s biggest flooding events, and across the past week, our Council crews have worked around the clock to bring our buses back as quickly as possible. Power outages created black spots in our drivers’ radio network, and we had 25% of driver facilities which suffered extensive damage from storms and flooding.

Now, there is still some work to do to ensure that facilities are there to support our drivers, including at the Toombul interchange where we’ve set up temporary stops for passengers and we’re working to identify a suitable replacement for driver facilities at this location, as well as the installation of portaloos at West End and Fairfield while we await longer term repairs. An enormous amount of work has gone into reopening roads by repairing road surfaces and traffic signals, as well as clearing debris to make our road networks safe and accessible again.

As this work was completed, we were gradually able to restore services running to a Saturday timetable, leading up to a full restoration of services today. As we complete the final repairs, there may still be some diversions in place for some routes. So, I thank residents for their continued patience and their understanding while we deal with some of these minor service disruptions. We know that our buses are one of the city’s most vital services and the impact to services in the last week have only served to further emphasise the importance of public transport connections in Brisbane.

Now, we’ve said it here in the past, but over 70 million trips are made on our buses each and every year, and our transport network in Brisbane relies heavily on our city’s 1,200 buses. I really want to thank our drivers who made sure residents made it home safely, especially on that first Sunday of the flood as weather conditions became really severe. We’ve heard stories of drivers going out of their way to help passengers, doing their best to get everybody home despite the weather and the numerous stop closures. I have a few pieces of customer feedback from the last few days I’d like to share with the Chamber’s indulgence.

Now, this is direct customer feedback, ‘a big thank you to the driver helping every passenger on the 222 find their way after several stops were closed, definitely a driver who cares about his passengers’. One passenger said, they quote, ‘just want to say thank you to the amazing effort of the driver who is giving information to passengers and updating them with services’, unquote. Another said, ‘I would like to thank the driver. I had missed the 301 and the next service was 45 minutes away. The driver kindly dropped me close to my final destination’.

Mr Chair, as I updated the Chamber on our last meeting, our ferry services remain suspended. This takes out a critical part of our public transport network that is relied on by many, many people. Whilst our priority was the safety of staff and customers, the dedicated team at RiverCity Ferries have worked tirelessly to protect our vessels, and I look forward to seeing them come off the hard stand at Murarrie and get back into service after needing repairs and maintenance. Our ferry terminals will need a little bit longer to get ready to accept passengers again.

The first step is being able to undertake those assessments that I talked about earlier, but it’s good to know our terminals withstood extremely large forces from the water and the debris, and all of them remain intact. What this means for Brisbane residents is that, instead of replacing terminals over a period of years, we only have to repair them now. As I said, these terminals and CityCats being out of action creates issues in public transport coverage in the city.

The LORD MAYOR has made very clear that we’ll look at how buses can support these communities that rely on ferries and have been left without now access to public transport as a result of the ferry network being out of action. What we want to do is partner with TransLink. One idea would be to fast-track the Gold CityGlider, and we’re preparing a business case for that. Mr Chair, finally, I’m very proud of the work our bus operators did once again responding to the call with the Mud Army 2.0 as they did in 2011. Transport for Brisbane was proud to supply 319 vehicles to the LORD MAYOR’s Mud Army, including both standard—

Chair: Thank you, Councillor MURPHY.

Councillor MURPHY: Thanks, Chair.

Chair: Your time has expired.

Further questions?

Councillor CASSIDY.

**Question 4**

Councillor CASSIDY: Thanks very much, Chair. My question is to Councillor WINES, the Infrastructure Chair.

Councillor WINES, what date did you fly out of Brisbane to Dubai and what date did you land back in Brisbane?

Chair: Councillor WINES.

Councillor WINES: I want to thank Councillor CASSIDY for his keen interest in my wellbeing. I always appreciate his care and concern at these times.

As Councillors would recall, in a recent Council meeting, I was asked to go on Council business to represent the city at an important Olympics-based event. I travelled as the item before the Council last week indicated, and I just want to say that, at the time, the Premier was telling the people of Queensland that there was no cause for alarm. Perhaps—

Councillor CASSIDY: Point of order, Chair.

Councillor WINES: —I was wrong to accept—

Councillor CASSIDY: Point of—

Chair: Point of order to you, Councillor CASSIDY.

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor CASSIDY: It’s a pretty simple question about what date Councillor WINES left and got back. I certainly didn’t ask him whether he thought it was a good idea to go or not, just a very simple question.

Chair: Councillor WINES, to the question, please.

Councillor WINES: Thank you, Mr Chair. As I said, it was an interesting—you know, it’s an interesting question whether I should have relied upon the Premier’s statement. Earlier this evening—

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor WINES: Earlier this evening—

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor CASSIDY: Point of order, Chair.

Councillor WINES: Earlier this evening, we had Labor Councillors critical—

Chair: Point of order to you, Councillor CASSIDY.

Councillor CASSIDY: Thank you.

Councillor WINES: —critical of the LORD MAYOR for advising his people—

Chair: Excuse me, Councillor WINES. Just—

Councillor CASSIDY, point of order.

Councillor CASSIDY: Councillor WINES seems to have not heard the question because he’s now just said he thought it was interesting whether he should have gone or not, or something like that.

It was a very simple question. I asked him what date he left Brisbane and what date he arrived back in Brisbane. There was nothing else in that question whatsoever, Chair, so you’ll have to direct him to answer it.

Chair: Councillor CASSIDY, it relates to a trip that was undertaken by Councillor WINES on behalf of the Council. I believe Councillor WINES is answering the question.

Councillor WINES: Earlier today, Labor Councillors were indicating that the early warning system that Brisbane City had in place was not appropriate while their own Premier, while the Labor Premier was telling people to carry on as per normal.

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor WINES: Perhaps I and her Treasurer, Treasurer Cameron Dick, who—

*Councillors interjecting.*

Councillor WINES: The Treasurer Cameron Dick, travelling first class—

*Councillors interjecting.*

Councillor WINES: —also took the Premier’s advice to be something that could be relied upon, and the thing is so many people, too many people did, it turned out, and perhaps too many people have been taking her advice for too long, but I did rely upon what the Premier had said, that the danger had passed and that people should carry on ordinarily.

Councillor CASSIDY: Point of order, Chair.

Chair: Point of order to you, Councillor CASSIDY.

Councillor CASSIDY: This is bordering on ridiculous. We know he was there. We know that he didn’t fly back at the earliest opportunity because he continued to go to events that he specifically asked to attend, like that Expo. What we want to know is what date he left Brisbane and what date he got back to Brisbane. It’s very simple.

Chair: Councillor WINES, can you please provide some detail in response to the question please?

Councillor WINES: I can, I can. As the Councillor would know, I—the exiting flight that I shared with Treasurer Dick, he left at the same time that I did on 26 February, and I left and I returned on 1 March. The balance of time can be explained by the fact that, to travel to Australia, one—a person must have a negative PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test, which took me 24 hours to secure the results of my PCR test, and that accounts for that balance of time, but once I was there, I accounted for—I moved within hours to secure a PCR test so that I may return and I also secured a return ticket.

Chair: Thank you, Councillor WINES.

Further questions?

Councillor HUANG.

**Question 5**

Councillor HUANG: Thank you, Mr Chair. My question is to the Chair of the Finance and City Governance Committee, Councillor CUNNINGHAM.

Councillor CUNNINGHAM, last Sunday the LORD MAYOR made a very important announcement regarding rates relief for flood affected residents. Could you please update the Chamber on the particulars of this policy and how you will provide a financial reprieve for those affected by the recent floods?

Chair: Thank you.

Councillor CUNNINGHAM.

Councillor CUNNINGHAM: Thank you, Mr Chair, and through you, thanks to Councillor HUANG for the question.

As the LORD MAYOR said, thousands of residents across Brisbane have been impacted by this natural disaster. The widespread scale of the damage, even compared to the 2011 event, is unprecedented. The event has had a varying degree of impact across at least 164 suburbs. To put that into perspective, Mr Chair, our city has 196 suburbs. While the clean-up is ongoing, residents are still coming to terms with the personal emotional toll that this event will have on their families and loved ones.

No amount of money can bring back a loved one, and no insurance payout can bring back cherished photos and sentimental items that are lost. With that said, we want to ensure as a Council we’re doing everything we can to make things easier for our residents, to not add to the burden, to take the pressure off at a time when many will feel helpless, where many have lost their livelihoods and are uncertain about what the future could hold for them.

Council doesn’t have all the same levers that the State and Federal Governments do, but the LORD MAYOR is committed to doing whatever we can at a local level to support residents. That’s why the LORD MAYOR has announced a rates relief package that will support the entire city, but especially those who have been affected by the floods. The first part of the relief package is the postponement of the April quarter residential rates bill by one month.

These will now be issued in late April and in early May, giving ratepayers across Brisbane an extra month to pay their rates bill, helping with household cash flow and giving people a little bit of extra money in their pocket for a month. This will apply to roughly 488,000 properties right across Brisbane. Mr Chair, hopefully, for those who have the means, some people may be able to use that bit of extra money in their pockets in March and in April to shop at some of the flood-affected businesses in our city that have been able to reopen their doors.

Secondly, and most significantly, the LORD MAYOR has announced that residents impacted by the floods will be eligible for a $250 rebate on their next rates bill. We expect that this could benefit around 30,000 ratepayers across business. Our Contact Centre is already registering residents for this rebate and our officers are preparing an online platform right now to allow residents to easily apply for this support. This will be ready next week and we will certainly be providing more information to ratepayers and also to Councillors, to answer all questions and ensure we get as many people as we can apply as soon as possible. By delaying rates notices for a month, we will be able to process the $250 rate rebates and have them apply to the April quarter rates notice wherever possible.

With that said, applications will stay open for three months until mid-June, so if for whatever reason someone doesn’t apply in time for the April quarter, it’s another chance for them to get the rebate on the following rates bill. Mr Chair, the message to Brisbane residents is really simple. If your property was flooded in any way, you will be eligible for a $250 rebate. The average quarterly rates bill across Brisbane this financial year is just over $433. If you apply a $250 rebate to that average account, the next rates bill will be $183.

The average quarterly rates bill in the hard-hit area of Oxley is $382, so for those eligible households, their next rates bill will be about $132. The rebate recognises the enormity of what flooded residents have been through, and in a small way, I like to think of it also as a bit of a thank you to residents who have been supporting each other throughout this event. In addition to the rebate, flood victims facing financial difficulties will also be able to access an extra 60-day extension on their rates notices.

I must add that, as is always the case, our rates team will continue to take a compassionate approach and work with people on payment plans if they require it and if they ask for it. We will support our residents through any financial hardship that they are facing.

We have brought forward this item to be on the agenda for later tonight so that we can get this program up and running just as soon as possible. I do want to thank all Councillors on both sides of the Chamber who have already indicated their support—

Chair: Councillor CUNNINGHAM, your time has expired.

Further questions?

Councillor GRIFFITHS: Yes, I do.

Chair: Councillor GRIFFITHS.

**Question 6**

Councillor GRIFFITHS: Yes, thank you. Look, my question is to the LORD MAYOR.

LORD MAYOR, in the peak of the floods, many residents were forced to flee their homes at a moment’s notice. Many sought refuge at local community facilities, Council-owned community facilities like their bowls club, who were more than happy to accommodate them. Then, out of nowhere, your LNP DEPUTY MAYOR, Krista ADAMS, ordered these bowls clubs to evict residents. They were forced to get to one of Council’s two evacuation centres by themselves.

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor GRIFFITHS: I think this is just appalling.

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor GRIFFITHS: I notice I’m being abused by Councillor Krista ADAMS.

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor GRIFFITHS: How callous and—point of order, Mr Chair.

Chair: Yes, point of order to you, Councillor GRIFFITHS.

Councillor ADAMS, please don’t interject while the question is being asked.

Councillor GRIFFITHS: I’ll just repeat that part of the question. They were forced to get to one of two Council evacuation centres by themselves after they were forced out by Councillor ADAMS. How callous and cruel—

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor GRIFFITHS: —does your LNP—

Chair: Councillor ADAMS, please.

Councillor CASSIDY: Point of order, Chair.

Councillor GRIFFITHS: I think she should withdraw that, but—

DEPUTY MAYOR: Yes, point of order.

Chair: Point of order to you, Councillor CASSIDY.

Councillor CASSIDY: Yes, Councillor ADAMS just unmuted herself and shouted the word ‘liar’, which is being recorded here—on here tonight, on the Zoom meeting. So I’d ask that you ask her to withdraw that.

Chair: Yes. Councillor ADAMS, could you please withdraw that assertion? There will be ample opportunity to respond to any questions later.

DEPUTY MAYOR: I’m sure there will, but as Councillor GRIFFITHS never had, absolutely not.

Chair: Please just withdraw, please, Councillor ADAMS.

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor GRIFFITHS: I won’t accept that. She’s called me a liar.

Councillor CASSIDY: Point of order.

Councillor GRIFFITHS: I don’t accept that.

DEPUTY MAYOR: You call me a liar every week, Councillor GRIFFITHS. I’m not withdrawing.

Councillor CASSIDY: Point of order. Point of order, Chair.

Chair: Yes, Councillor CASSIDY.

Councillor CASSIDY: Yes, Councillor ADAMS is continuing to show disrespect to you as Chair. You’ve just asked her to withdraw and she said absolutely not, so I assume you’re going to go through the process of—

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| **Order – DEPUTY MAYOR, Councillor Krista ADAMS**  The Chair then advised the DEPUTY MAYOR that as she is displaying unsuitable meeting conduct, in accordance with section 21(8) of the *Meetings Local Law 2001*, an order reprimanding her for her conduct was being issued. |

Councillor GRIFFITHS: I’ll finish my question. How callous and cruel—

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor GRIFFITHS: —does your LNP Administration—and you, DEPUTY MAYOR, Councillor Krista ADAMS, have to be to evict residents at their most vulnerable time?

Chair: LORD MAYOR.

LORD MAYOR: Well, Mr Chair, that’s an interesting question from someone that residents tell me wasn’t anywhere in Brisbane when the floods were happening. This is an interesting question—

*Councillor interjecting.*

LORD MAYOR: —from a member of a team who’s been criticising Councillor WINES—

*Councillor interjecting.*

Chair: Councillor JOHNSTON, please.

*Councillor interjecting.*

LORD MAYOR: —when the person who asked the question was nowhere near—

*Councillor interjecting.*

LORD MAYOR: —his local electorate when the flooding was occurring, according to local residents.

*Councillor interjecting.*

LORD MAYOR: So what I can say here is that, not only is this disgustingly hypocritical, this question—

Councillor GRIFFITHS: Point of order.

LORD MAYOR: —but also that it is—

*Councillor interjecting.*

LORD MAYOR: —absolutely false.

Councillor GRIFFITHS: Point of order.

Chair: Point of order to you, Councillor GRIFFITHS .

LORD MAYOR: Absolutely false.

Councillor GRIFFITHS: Yes, I claim to be misrepresented.

Chair: Claim to be misrepresented? Okay, noted.

LORD MAYOR: So, what we see here is repeated false claims about Council supposedly shutting down evacuation centres or evicting people. No such thing happened. No such thing happened.

Now, various claims have been made, and all I can determine is that they have been made for cynical political reasons, but we have not shut down any centres and nor have we evicted anyone, but what we have done is made sure that there are extremely well-serviced evacuation centres available during this event, where people can get access not only to food and shelter—

*Councillor interjecting.*

LORD MAYOR: —and a place to lie, a place to lay their head, but also that there were appropriate services there for them, appropriate services not only from Council and charitable organisations, but also State Government agencies, as well. There was the security of having police officers there, as well. So, Council, we did not shut down any evacuation centres, and so this claim is absolutely false.

Now, one of the wonderful things that we saw happen during this event is that a number of organisations spontaneously opened community hubs. Now, these were community clubs like bowls clubs, like schools, that basically decided that they would open up as a hub to support local residents. That is a great thing. That is a great thing.

*Councillor interjecting.*

LORD MAYOR: That is simply not true, Mr Chair. That was not true, and once again, I really do wonder why there are these false claims being made in these two cases, because those centres—

*Councillor interjecting.*

LORD MAYOR: —were not shut down and people were not evicted and, in fact, in the case of the Graceville State School, one where there was a claim made that we had tried to shut them down, I visited that establishment and they were continuing to provide an amazing service for local residents—

*Councillor interjecting.*

LORD MAYOR: —not shut down, not shut down, and not asked to shut down.

*Councillor interjecting.*

LORD MAYOR: Mr Chair, it is simply not true, and so I really do wonder about the motivation of these questions. I really do wonder about why there’s been an attempt made to try and politicise this situation, where everyone was trying to do the best they can, where Council set up two extremely well-resourced evacuation centres, which always had extra capacity and spare capacity, and where we also appreciated the support of local community organisations that wanted to establish community hubs and drop-in centres to support their community.

That is a great thing, and I commend both the bowls club and the Graceville State School and other locations around the city that set up as spontaneous community centres. It was a fantastic thing. It was a thing that we commend them for and thank them for, and I got the opportunity to thank them in person at the Graceville State School. So, I do not know where this is coming from. I do not know what the motivation is, but I think it is really concerning, Mr Chair, that we are seeing these false claims being made.

Chair: Thank you, LORD MAYOR.

Councillor GRIFFITHS, your claim of misrepresentation.

Councillor GRIFFITHS: Yes, I just want to state really clearly that I was in Brisbane for the whole week, helping out at Rocklea and Archerfield. There’s no—like, that was where I was for the whole time of the flood. So, those accusations said by the LORD MAYOR are untrue. Thank you.

Chair: Further questions?

Councillor HUTTON.

**Question 7**

Councillor HUTTON: Thank you, Mr Chair. My question is to the Chair of the Infrastructure Committee, Councillor WINES. Councillor WINES, there have been many Council assets damaged by the sheer force of the recent creek and river flooding in Brisbane. Could you please update the Chamber on the state of our assets, including our roads, traffic lights, and bridges?

Chair: Thank you, Councillor WINES.

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor WINES: Thank you. Thank you, Mr Chair, and thank you to Councillor HUTTON. I really appreciate the opportunity to talk about some of the work that the division has been doing to get our traffic network working properly again. As all Councillors would know, the—what could well be the largest flood event in 200 years occurred in the last week. This has affected the operation of our transport network. Council is continuing to assist with recovery efforts to restore infrastructure to help get the road network back to normal as soon as possible.

Over the coming weeks, Council will be commencing marathon efforts to restore what could be—what will be tens, if not hundreds of millions of dollars’ worth of flood-damaged infrastructure. During the event, the BMTMC (Brisbane Metropolitan Transport Management Centre) and the Congestion Reduction Unit operated around the clock, working with other agencies such as the Queensland Police to manage congestion, identify flooded roads, and provide critical intelligence to the LDCC (Local Disaster Coordination Centre) for disaster response.

During the peak of the event, the BMTMC was assisting in managing up to 80— 80 water over road incidents, managing the closure of approximately 50 significant roads including very important road corridors such as Coronation Drive, Milton Road, and Bowen Bridge Road, as well as—that is on top of a number of Department of Transport and Main Roads corridors, main road arterials. Up to 100 traffic signal faults were also reported, which included totally flooded intersections, water-damaged controllers, and other critical equipment and loss of power.

Also, please can Councillors keep in mind that the—that, in some instances, the water was so deep that the entire traffic light, including the bulbs, went underwater, and this has provided a new challenge to try and return those particular items back to full and proper operation. Incidents coordinated by the Traffic Management Centre (TMC) within the BMTMC during the event included 30 crashes, 155 abandoned, stationery, and broken-down vehicles, 34 debris jobs such as fallen trees, debris over road associated with rain and flooding, with more than 1,300 phone calls taken by the TMC. The road network was mostly cleared of water and debris within the key corridors ready for yesterday’s Monday morning peak, with a special recognition to the efforts of the City Standards work crews.

On the topic of structures, bridges, from the initial assessment, it appears that no significant damage has been sustained by our bridge infrastructure. Assessments are ongoing and the full extent of the potential damage has been confirmed. At this stage, most of the damage is limited to significant debris removal and barrier damage. This stands as a testimony to the decision that was made 10 years ago to begin converting all of our bridges from whatever material they were before into steel and concrete.

It has allowed them to weather these floods far better than they did in 2011 and 2013, and that—much of the damage is limited and, in many cases, superficial. The Gresham Street construction site and temporary bridge was impacted by the event and was closed for a short period. It was one day, and it was back to full operations on 2 March. At that time, it should also be noted that the intersection of Waterworks Road/Gresham Street, the lights did not operate for an extended period and, as a result of the flooding, the temporary bridge was reduced to one lane for a time.

On embankments and retaining walls, due to excessive soil saturation caused by the rain event, several landslips have occurred across the network, with the most serious being at Settlement Road and the border of the suburbs of Keperra and The Gap, and at Mt Nebo Road, with a total of 24 slips of various sizes being observed, with 10 to 15 of these classed as significant with heights varying of eight to 15 metres, with up to 50 cubic metres in spoil required at these—excuse me, 50 cubic metres in spoil removal required at these locations.

So, a special recognition to Councillor TOOMEY as the ward Councillor for both of those landslip regions. Today, their work has focused on having corridors made safe and open to traffic. When safe to do so, the landslips will be assessed again for potential long-term remediation. More information will be provided on long‑term remediation in next week’s Council meeting, after which—

Chair: Councillor WINES, your time has expired.

Councillor WINES: Thank you. Thank you, Mr Chair.

Chair: Further questions?

Yes, Councillor SRI.

Councillor SRI: Thank you, Chair. Can you hear me okay?

Chair: Yes.

**Question 8**

Councillor SRI: Thanks. My question is to the LORD MAYOR. After previous flooding events, I’ve raised with your Administration my concerns about the location of sandbag depots, and this has been a recurring issue in many recent storm events. We only have four dedicated sandbag depots across the city, and some of those depots are not at all accessible by road when we experience major creek flooding. We saw that in these most recent floods where, even if residents needed sandbags, they literally could not get to the depots because roads were cut.

Do you think this is a good time to be talking about setting up additional depots? In particular, I’m mindful of areas around Coorparoo and the lower side of Woolloongabba in the inner southside that are very vulnerable to flooding, but can’t easily get to the depot at Morningside. Will you consider and would you commit to exploring the establishment of a new sandbag depot somewhere in the inner city or inner southside?

Chair: LORD MAYOR. LORD MAYOR.

LORD MAYOR: Ah, yes, Mr Chair. Thank you, Councillor SRI, for the question, another really fair and reasonable question, and thank you for it. One of the challenges we definitely had this time was the sheer number of roads that were cut off in the city. We all experienced it, trying to get out and about while that rain was pelting down. Unexpected roads were under and significant, I guess, road closures right across the city were happening. So, you know, this is different to 2011. It’s definitely different. You know, there were defined areas that flooded in 2011. They were linked to river flooding.

We had a number of days’ warning that that flooding would occur, and it was dry in terms of the rainfall at the time when the flooding occurred. I will never forget the day when the river peaked in 2011 because it was a sunny day and the river just kept on coming up. We had a very different situation here. So, to answer your question, Councillor SRI, yes, absolutely happy to have a look at better systems or different systems to effectively respond to what was all types of flooding happening at once, so river flooding, creek flooding, and overland flow.

I think absolutely, I think we should always be looking at ways that things can be done better in the future. Are there different locations where sandbags can be located? I think that’s a reasonable question, Councillor SRI, so happy to have a look at that.

Chair: Thank you.

Further questions?

Councillor MACKAY.

**Question 9**

Councillor MACKAY: Yes, my question is to the Chair of the Environment, Parks and Sustainability Committee, Councillor DAVIS. Councillor DAVIS, during the 2011 floods, we saw many of our riverside parks completely subsumed by the Brisbane River. Could you please provide an update on how the recent flooding event has impacted our suburban parks and waterways and what recovery will look like?

Chair: LORD MAYOR—oh sorry, Councillor DAVIS. Councillor DAVIS, the question was to you.

Councillor DAVIS: Promotion. Thank you, Mr Chair, and through you, I’d like to thank Councillor MACKAY for the question. Mr Chair, as a former Environment, Parks and Sustainability Committee Chair, you may well be aware that this week is in fact Parks Week, and I had very much hoped to have come into the Chamber this week to speak about our parks in quite a different way. However, the impacts of the severe weather events that we’ve experienced in the past week will be my focus today. I’ve provided the Environment, Parks and Sustainability Committee with a high-level overview of how our city parks fared during the recent event this morning.

We all understand the importance of parks and greenspaces for the residents of Brisbane, and this was evident in COVID-19 when people retreated to their parks and green sanctuaries for recreation and leisure. We know that Brisbane parks enhance our active and healthy lifestyle through the range of playgrounds and dog parks, fitness equipment, BMX, skate tracks, and barbeque areas, and many of these features are still available to use.

Council understands how important parks are in providing both physical and emotional wellbeing during what are these challenging times, and that’s why we are prioritising the inspections of these parks, so that we know where to put Council efforts and energy into first. We do not underestimate the extent of the damage that these floods has caused, but the Schrinner Council is committed to bringing back these impacted parks into service as quickly as possible. We are aware that less than half of all of our parks across the city has had some impact. The damage has not been limited to one type of park, as we’ve seen impacts across dog off-leash areas, sporting fields, playgrounds, and the like. We understand that that will take some time to rectify, just as the damage did in 2011.

This flood has impacted many suburbs of Brisbane and Council will ensure it takes a measured approach in assessing the damage, safety risks, and rectification works. We’ll ensure that our valued parks receive the urgency that they deserve, but obviously, parks are one of many asset types across the city that we are returning back to business as soon as practically possible. Across the city, officers have undertaken a high-level pass on what the likely assets damage looks like across our park assets.

Across all of our Council asset types, Council is undertaking assessment of condition of these assets. This information will help develop an understanding of the risk and safety to members of the public. Council will then assess based on this risk and safety how we will prioritise where Council effort will be focused. While Council is returning parks to service as quickly as possible, we do ask that residents be patient, stay safe, and just stay away from damaged equipment in our parks.

Council is very proud of its resilient network of parks and we are already seeing many of them bouncing back from the events of last weekend, but we know that there are things that we can learn from this event and we will learn from the flood event, and Council is committed to remaining at the forefront of innovative park design, continuing to transform our parks into resilient, multipurpose venues, accessible to everybody in Brisbane. Thank you, Mr Chair.

Chair: Thank you, Councillor DAVIS.

That ends Question Time.

LORD MAYOR, Establishment and Coordination Committee report.

## CONSIDERATION OF COMMITTEE REPORTS:

### ESTABLISHMENT AND COORDINATION COMMITTEE

The Right Honourable, the LORD MAYOR (Councillor Adrian SCHRINNER), Chair of the Establishment and Coordination Committee, moved, seconded by the DEPUTY MAYOR (Councillor Krista ADAMS), that the report of the meeting of that Committee held on 7 March 2022, be adopted.

Chair: LORD MAYOR.

LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Mr Chair. As Councillors are well aware, there is one item on the agenda here which is the partial rebate of rates and the grant of rates concession for the South East Queensland rainfall and flooding event. This has been covered both by myself and Councillor CUNNINGHAM in detail. It’s been announced previously. This is just about implementing that rebate program, so look, I won’t dwell on it further than what we’ve already said. The information has been provided to Councillors and I look forward to seeing Councillors’ support for this particular proposal.

Chair: Any further speakers?

Councillor CASSIDY.

Councillor CASSIDY: Thanks very much, Chair. I’ll speak on this item, and I’m glad Councillor GRIFFITHS had the opportunity to clear up the truth around that slander that the LORD MAYOR was spreading—

Chair: Councillor CASSIDY, to the report, please.

Councillor CASSIDY: —around earlier, and we know that an LNP Councillor has been using a fake account on Facebook to spread—

Chair: Councillor CASSIDY, to the report, please, or I’ll—

Councillor CASSIDY: Yes, you know who you are.

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor CASSIDY: So, Chair, this extra E&C report which came through overnight sees a bare minimum rates rebate for residents who are desperate for assistance at the moment. Brisbane’s residents’ lives have been turned upside down. They’re struggling to find shelter, let alone worry about paying their rates. For residents like Wilma and her son Bert in Deagon, Wilma was rescued from the roof of the shed in her yard by a neighbour in a tinny on Sunday night dawn, on the last—27, I think that was, February. She’s now sheltering at another son’s house in Shorncliffe. Beryl was 91 years old, has lived in Deagon for many, many decades in the same house and again was rescued by boat by her neighbours.

None of them were warned about the impending flood danger around Deagon. Diane, who I met the other day, she’s been living in her family home now for decades and has lost absolutely everything. Her entire home was inundated. Since she was growing up in that house as a child, has never seen anything like that before. So I think the least we could do, Chair, is waive the entire quarter of rates for those residents who have been affected so comprehensively, but all this LNP Mayor could manage is a measly $6 to $7 million of relief out of a $3.6 billion budget. Not only that, but all of the onus on applying for this partial rebate has been put onto residents themselves.

They have to contact Council to apply. They have to prove they were flooded. Council teams were out on the streets throughout the floods and could have been taking note of which addresses were flooded. They certainly know which streets were flooded in my ward and half of Bracken Ridge Ward, because I have been doing that work as well. There should be a more proactive approach from Council to build this database of flood impacted properties. It might have been possible if the majority of kerbside collection crews were all in-house employees and we weren’t relying on external contractors to perform that work.

The last thing residents need to think about is lodging applications for partial rebates when they’re either in the middle of lengthy, complex insurance claims or they’ve lost absolutely everything. This is a woeful financial contribution from Council, considering all of the other costs that Council will be incurring throughout this flood recovery will be reimbursed by State and Federal Governments. Don’t be fooled by this LNP Mayor’s faux generosity. Everything from the cost of the kerbside collection we’ve been talking about to mosquito spraying can be claimed from the State and Federal Government’s Disaster Recovery Fund.

So, the LORD MAYOR really has left residents alone throughout this crisis, Chair, and treated most things as a photo opportunity to get out there, but when it comes to real contributions, he’s left the heavy lifting clearly to the State and Federal Governments. This Council could and should be doing so much more, and residents deserve so much more than this LNP Administration is dishing up. We will be supporting this item today, but call for much, much more support for residents in their time of need.

Chair: Further speakers?

Councillor SRI—sorry, Councillor CUNNINGHAM, you had your hand up.

Councillor CUNNINGHAM: Oh thanks, Mr Chair. Look, I wish to speak on item A and I’ll keep my comments really brief, as I’ve also spoken about in Question Time, and obviously, the LORD MAYOR’s discussed it at some length. So, as we all know, the event resulted in widespread damage to homes and businesses and it did cause significant financial loss to individuals and local businesses, as well. As the LORD MAYOR has detailed, thousands of flood victims will receive a $250 rebate off their next rates bill as part of this recovery package.

Now, as at this morning, this is by far the most generous move from any other local government in South East Queensland that we have seen. Now, admittedly, I haven’t seen anything else come through today, but as at this morning, no other local government in South East Queensland has made this available to residents who have been impacted by floods, and I think that’s a really important distinction to make this evening. This will benefit around 30,000 properties in Brisbane.

Now, the online application form will be available from 14 March, but residents can simply call our Contact Centre right now to register if they wish. We will make it as easy as possible for them. I will intend to provide Councillors and ward officers with more information on the particulars of this online process and the eligibility requirements just as soon as they are available, so that all Councillors, no matter where you’re from in Brisbane, can support residents and get as many people signed up as possible to receive the rebate. I just want to quickly thank the Corporate Finance team and the Rates Management team for their work in pulling this rebate together so quickly. Thanks, Mr Chair.

Chair: Thanks, Councillor CUNNINGHAM.

Councillor SRI.

Councillor SRI: Thanks, Chair. I rise to speak on this item, as well. I’ll be supporting it, but I guess I must say it’s an odd one, philosophically, and I think it’s hard to talk intelligently about the appropriateness of rates relief in a context where there are so many other things that I think the Council spends money on so poorly. As a general principle, I’m quite inclined towards the view that it’s more efficient and better for the collective interest when entities like the local council coordinate the use of resources, and some would argue that, rather than everyone having—getting slightly more money back, a well‑run council and an efficient local council should be able to do more with that money and support the community more effectively than leaving every single resident to themselves.

I am a little concerned about the ideological implications of saying, well, look, the best thing we can do for ratepayers is to not take their money and not use their money to deliver services for the common good. I think there’s something interesting there that’s worthy of deeper discussion and philosophical reflection, but unfortunately, I don’t think we’re going to see that in this particular Chamber and in this particular meeting. I personally think that, in the context of disasters, it’s really important to be reasserting the important role that councils can play and to say that, hey, look, this money will be used efficiently to help residents, but we know from past experience and we know from all the other things that the current Administration spends money on that, unfortunately, that’s not necessarily the case, and that the Council often spends money on stuff that isn’t a high priority.

So, in that context, I feel a little bit more comfortable supporting this rates rebate. I am kind of conscious, though, and I kind of agree with Councillor CASSIDY that 250 is kind of a tokenistic amount. For people who are really seriously affected, it’s a bit of a drop in the ocean and it’s barely going to be on their radar. Some people will be really, really grateful for this and it will make a significant difference to ratepayers on lower incomes, but I guess I just do want to interrogate and encourage Councillors to reflect more deeply on what it says about the role of local government if our only—or if our big response in a crisis is to simply say, all right, we’ll just give everyone a tiny little bit of money back and say, look, job done.

We’ve helped people because we gave them a rates rebate. It’s like, I’d rather see Council actually helping people and using our significant resources to build community resilience and to support residents more directly through collectively coordinated action. So yes, the rates rebate and the—I guess makes sense in this context. I think there are probably slightly better ways to use $7 million, but then I’m not sure that this Council would use that money more efficiently, anyway. I did want to speak to the fact that, as others have identified, there is State and Federal money available here and there’s presumably also going to be some pretty big insurance payouts.

So, if the Mayor in his concluding remarks could make a—could provide a little more insight and detail into what other sources of funding will be forthcoming in response to this disaster and what the arrangements are in terms of insurance, that would be really helpful for me because what we’re essentially doing here is voting to reduce Council revenue, and I am worried that that money is going to come from somewhere and that some essential project is going to be canned, or down the track we’re going to hear that some service that residents really rely on can’t be delivered because of this rates rebate.

So, if the Mayor could provide a little bit more assurance on what services or what particular projects he sees—he considers might not be funded as a result of this rates rebate, I’d be really interested to hear that. I’m engaging with this conversation in good faith and, like I said, I am supporting the motion, but I do have some reservations because I’ve seen before instances where the Council has said, okay, we’re going to give people a rates rebate, and then later says, well, because we gave people a rates rebate, now we can’t fund this essential service or this important public project.

So, I would just like a little more clarity on that. I appreciate that the Mayor won’t have exact figures on what the insurance payout is going to be. We know it’s way too soon for that. I know the Mayor is not going to have an exact dollar value on the damage bill and he probably isn’t going to have an exact dollar value on the likely support from State and Federal Governments, but at least some indication or ballpark figure of what the financial hit to the Council could be. It would be really valuable, I think, but yes, as Councillor CASSIDY said, this is a fairly small proportion of the Council budget, so I’m not desperately concerned about it.

I am though, as I said, keen to emphasise that sometimes, a local institution or a local council can be more effective at deploying resources strategically to clean up after a disaster or to build community resilience, and that we shouldn’t capitulate to what might be called a neoliberal ideology or religious framework where we say, look, under our religion of neoliberalism, it’s best for Council not to do anything. We’re just going to give residents their money back and that’s it. I think there’s something there that needs to be explored in greater depth, and I hope some of the people who are watching and engaging with this meeting will pull me up on this stuff and make time for more detailed conversations, because we’re going to see more and more disasters like this.

This one, in a way, kind of came out of nowhere. There were a few meteorologists who were predicting it as early as the Wednesday before the weekend of the floods, but there’s every possibility we could see another flood event like this within a couple of weeks. I’m touching wood here in the houseboat at the moment, but it’s entirely possible that we could see more severe weather events this summer, and certainly in future years. So, is it the case that every time there’s a disaster of this severity, Council will simply hand back a whole bunch of money to residents, and in so doing, reduce its capacity to deliver essential services and to support further recoveries?

Like I said, it’s not so much a question about this specific rates rebate, but about the more general philosophy that sits underneath it. I consider myself to be more of an anarchist than a socialist, in the sense that I prefer to see resources managed locally and communally at a local level, rather than through highly centralised bureaucratic entities. I think there’s a strong argument for rates, the money that’s collected via rates to be decided on and allocated at a more localised level, with more discretionary power granted to local geographic communities, but simply giving rates money back to individuals doesn’t necessarily achieve that particular outcome.

So I guess it raises that question of what is the point of collecting rates in the first place if we actually believe that residents can use money more efficiently than Council? Why do we even charge rates to begin with? It does just make it into—it raises an interesting question that I hope Councillors will reflect on more deeply down the track, because I don’t think it’s sustainable, to be honest, to give ratepayers a rebate every time we have a disaster.

Just finally, I will add that we often see the rhetoric that, if Council increases rates, that will increase cost to landlords and that rents will go up. I don’t think that’s true, but it will be interesting to see whether rents go down as a result of Council reducing rates. Unfortunately, I suspect the rates discounts won’t be passed on to tenants, and that the tenants who’ve been directly impacted by flooding at their homes won’t directly benefit from this rates rebate, but that absentee investors who might not even live locally and aren’t directly affected by the flood, they’re the ones who benefit from this financially.

The tenants who are actually living in the flooded areas at the time of the flood and potentially lost a lot of possessions and had to deal with that direct hassle and trauma, they’re not going to get any benefit. So, I would also be interested to know if the Mayor would be encouraging landlords to pass on some of that rates discount back to tenants, being mindful that the tenants are the ones who are actually living in the flooded properties. Thanks.

Chair: Thank you.

Further speakers?

Councillor JOHNSTON.

Councillor JOHNSTON: Yes, thank you. I rise to speak on item A. I’d just make a few general remarks with respect to the floods, and then address the specifics, regarding the rates rebate. I’m one of only a few Councillors, I think, who was here in 2011 that had a significant part of their ward flooded, and I know there are other Councillors here who were there at the time, certainly Councillor MATIC, Councillor GRIFFITHS, and there are others, but there’s not very many of us that experienced widespread significant flooding in 2011.

I contributed to all of the Council reviews, to the Royal Commission, and as all of you in this Chamber know and everyone in Brisbane, I think, for the past 11 years, I’ve talked about stormwater and backflow valves and flood mitigation and land use change and town planning, because the most traumatic thing that’s ever happened in my life happened in 2011. It happened to about 5,000 households in my area, and now it’s happened again in 2022. It’s probably a few less this time around in my area.

The water is about a metre less than in 2011, sparing some people water in their houses and sparing some people water upstairs, but the 2022 flood has caused massive impacts around my ward. It’s very clear to me that Council’s disaster plans have failed the city. They failed them on so many levels, including on Saturday when the LDCC was stood up and on Saturday evening, I was reporting flooded suburbs. I was so concerned that the messages I was hearing, absolutely from the Premier, who deserves a lot of blame in this, as well, and the LORD MAYOR, that they were saying to stay put and to get sandbags.

Now, when you move into Brisbane six months ago or three years ago, and you weren’t here in 2011, and the civic leaders of the State and the city are telling you to stay put and get a sandbag, you don’t think you’re going to get three metres of water or four metres of water through your house. So you don’t evacuate and you lose everything. I spent Saturday night calling the State Member and the police, asking them to check on elderly residents in Oxley and Fairfield because I was concerned, and you know, I’m so pleased I did because I actually think people might have died.

We’re so lucky that the police went out. They commandeered canoes in my area, as I’m sure they did in other parts of the city. They went out and they engaged in lifesaving exercises on Saturday night, 26 February. Now, into Sunday in Brisbane, both the LORD MAYOR and the Premier were still downplaying this flood publicly. The messages were very much about, it’ll be parks and streets and roads, and I am madly driving around the ward, talking to people and saying, get ready, it’s coming. You know, the local retirement village couldn’t evacuate.

The army had to come in on Monday. The nursing home, the duty manager of the Regis at Yeronga, I’m saying to him, absolutely, get your cars out, you need to prepare now. Again, the army had to come and get everybody. The water didn’t go in, but it absolutely surrounded and trapped hundreds of elderly, vulnerable people. So, it wasn’t until about between eight and nine on Sunday night, so a whole 24 hours later, after whole suburbs in Brisbane are flooding, that this Council sent out a text message saying, you might flood.

Now, I’ve spent the last eight days talking to residents all over my ward and without question, they are angry that this has happened. They understand that this area floods and they understand this was extraordinary rainfall, but what they can’t understand is why, when it was clear to everybody that there were suburbs in the city that were flooding, which is an indicator of a disaster in other places in the city, that the Premier and the LORD MAYOR were downplaying this.

So, I welcome the fact that Justice de Jersey will be undertaking a review and warnings will form a significant part of that, because it was a massive failure. I certainly feel concerned that the LDCC wasn’t treating it seriously on Saturday night, and I don’t know why the messages that I was communicating in weren’t passed on to people like the LORD MAYOR, or if they were, why they weren’t mentioned in comms. LORD MAYOR, it’s very easy to list in your media, on Twitter, on your socials, you’ve got 20 people working for you and it’s super easy for the LORD MAYOR of the city to say, the following suburbs are flooding; evacuate. This means that other suburbs might flood; get ready to evacuate.

None of that happened. Instead, residents were told it was all parks and streets, and go and a get a sandbag or stay home. Lives have been destroyed because of what happened last weekend. The $250 rates rebate being offered by Council is the very least that they can do. It’s less important to residents that I speak to than getting the rubbish picked up off the streets, getting their parks reopened, getting community facilities back. I’ve still got schools closed in my ward.

The fact that this Council is doing what it always does, which is trying to distract the residents of Brisbane with a bribe from their failure in this national—in this natural disaster is what this is all about. Now, I’m not going to deny the residents of Brisbane $250 in their rates rebate. It’s clear that this LORD MAYOR has trouble spending this money appropriately, anyway, and that’s about what he spends on his comms budget for the year.

So, if there’s any question about where this money should come from, I’d say the LORD MAYOR could just do a little bit less advertising and we won’t even notice it in our budget, because I agree with Councillor SRI. The big concern here is, we’re not being told where this is coming from, and if it’s going to impact on real services in this city and impact on this city’s recovery, then that is going to be an appalling, low act by a LORD MAYOR who’s failed his city over the past eight days.

I also am concerned about the vulnerable people I’ve met. I always have had vulnerable people in my community in places like Fairfield, but two years ago, I inherited about two-thirds of Oxley, and it is the low side of Oxley, the Oxley Creek side of Oxley. I am saddened and distressed by the people that I’ve met over the last few days. They definitely need our help. Some of them don’t have anywhere to go. I’ve met people who are staying with strangers still. They are literally up the road with people who took them in on the night. They could not get to an emergency evacuation shelter. The roads in my area were cut. You could not move out of your street. You could not move out of your suburb, and you couldn’t get to Chandler.

I mean, thank God Riverlife Church opened up, and I gather Council had a red‑hot go at them about opening as an evacuation centre, as well, but thank God they had the guts to stay open because they saved lives over the weekend by being open and taking people in. There is no question that this Council—and it wasn’t a Council law, it was a Council officer—called the Graceville State School P&C and told them not to do what they were doing, which was taking in people who had climbed over neighbours’ fences to get out of their flooded houses and had gone up to the local school that had been a refuge for them in 2011.

To hear that a senior Council officer had tried to shut down a community response in a school full of brilliant people and volunteers was appalling. I heard it from the person who got the phone call, and the LORD MAYOR is a disgusting individual to say publicly that that person is a liar—

DEPUTY MAYOR: Point of order, Mr Chair.

Councillor JOHNSTON: —because they are not.

Chair: Point of order, Councillor ADAMS.

Councillor JOHNSTON.

DEPUTY MAYOR: Can I just ask you to call the Councillor back to the relevance on—to the report about the rates relief, please?

Chair: Councillor JOHNSTON, you’ve gone a long way from the report. Can I bring you back to the report, please? In fact, your time has expired. Thank you.

Any further speakers?

Councillor GRIFFITHS.

Councillor GRIFFITHS: Sorry. Yes, thank you, Mr Chair, and I just rise to speak on this item and also to say that I endorse what Councillor CASSIDY has said. This is not enough and it’s too late. I have real concerns that we’re actually putting it back on residents to apply for and we all know what happens when residents have to apply for it and they’re in trauma. They don’t apply for it. Really, I think it is an example of a leadership that is out of touch and a Mayor that is out of touch.

I just want to put on the record that I was here in 2011, and I think the response then was actually so much better. We had, in Rocklea, flooding on Saturday morning in the—like, eight o’clock I saw the flooding. I rang the Council and asked them to put up road signs. That didn’t happen. We had no warning and we had no one listening to us. It was devastating that nothing would happen, that we had to wait a few days before signs would be put up on roads to stop people driving through flooded water.

Certainly, the flooding in Rocklea and Archerfield was much worse Saturday, and then Saturday night, it really hit people there. I have to say that the people it hit were older people, there were younger people doing apprenticeships. We on the weekend had a suicide related to the flooding. People who can’t speak English, there were refugees, and there were COVID cases. There were people with mental health issues.

Everything that makes up Brisbane was at Rocklea, and it was devasting to deal with it and it was the community who were dealing with it, not Council. Council were sitting far away, organising a Mud Army. I think one of the things that highlights the pathetic, I’d say, the pathetic response of this Council was the fact that it took six days to get bins for food into the suburb of Rocklea. That was only after I went on radio with ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation), who couldn’t believe it, either. Why residents had to wait six days when other residents had them on the Tuesday, I find a bit mind‑boggling.

I just want to do a bit of comparison between here, what we’re offering now, which is $250, and what they—what happened in 2011. Can I say, in the 2011 flood, I didn’t have—frankly, I don’t have much time for one of the previous Mayors, Campbell Newman, but do you know what? He got in his car, he rang me, and he came out and walked the streets of Rocklea. He actually went into people’s homes and he talked to them. You know, we haven’t seen Councillor SCHRINNER at all in Rocklea or Archerfield. They call him the invisible man here.

We have not even, since it started to clear up, we have not seen this Mayor in that suburb. The need is huge, and the homes are damaged like you wouldn’t believe, over the roofs. The people are poor, and people don’t have much money. They have nothing, they can’t afford insurance. Insurance there is $8,000, they can’t afford it. This Council has given them a measly $250. I say to you, LORD MAYOR, why weren’t you there? Why aren’t you looking after all the city? Why did you neglect, why did you neglect some of the worst, most vulnerable residents in the city?

I have never seen anything, even Campbell, even Graham Quirk, would come out. They’d ring. They’d want to see people, because they were actually concerned about the residents of Brisbane. I just can’t explain—nothing can let me explain why this Mayor was invisible and why he hasn’t rung me and why he hasn’t been there. I know he’s rung Councillor JOHNSTON and seems very concerned about the people in Graceville. Well, he hasn’t picked up the phone to ring me. I think that’s pathetic and I think that’s out of touch.

Anyway, all I can say is this. What we’re delivering for residents now, you shouldn’t be proud of it. You should be ashamed of it because it comes from not listening. It comes from a media release need, something to show the residents of Brisbane we’re trying to do something. They can see through it. They can see through the heartlessness of this Mayor. So, LORD MAYOR, I’m inviting you—and I know you’ve disappeared from the screen—I invite you to come and meet with me and residents of Rocklea who want to meet with you, who want to take you into their homes.

Some of them were on TV tonight—you can watch it on the ABC—because they have not seen you. They don’t know where you are. They don’t know what you’re thinking. I can just say to you really clearly, if you’ve got an ounce of genuineness, an ounce of decency, you would bring back buyback, you would extend the Build Back Better so that we actually have it for all residents, because the residents of Rocklea are telling me when they ring, oh, we’re being told, you’re not eligible for it, you won’t be getting it. They should be getting it just like the good people of Toowong and St Lucia and so forth.

Everyone in the city should be eligible for that program, and it needs to be extended and expanded. You know what? One less green bridge in this city won’t be a bad thing if we help people get out of flooding. Instead of building four damn new green bridges, build three and put the money into helping these people.

Finally, I’m just going to conclude by saying, LORD MAYOR, you need to come out and meet with the residents of Rocklea. I’ll organise the meeting. I know how you love media. I’ll organise the media, and you can come and have a chat to them and see their homes and see what genuine battlers are going through. Thank you.

Chair: Further speakers?

Councillor OWEN.

Councillor OWEN: Thank you, Mr Chair. Mr Chair, I think there are some facts that also need to be put on the table in regards to the flood recovery effort and, particularly, the support that the Schrinner Administration has provided to the people of Rocklea. On behalf of the LORD MAYOR, I actually went down to Rocklea. I had been liaising with the Brisbane Markets. As the former Financial Controller at the Brisbane Markets, I have extensive contacts down there, and for that very reason, I was supporting our team because—

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor OWEN: —my ward was not—my ward was not severely impacted like others. So I put my hand up to willingly assist the team to ensure that, if there were people that we could talk to, if there were businesses in need of support—

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor OWEN: —if they were in need, if there were residents needing clean-up—

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor OWEN: —or assistance from the—assistance from the army for the kerbside clean-up, I was feeding that information back in through the LDCC through to the LORD MAYOR and DEPUTY MAYOR, and the Chair of City Standards to ensure that that was being dealt with. In fact, Rocklea Cold Storage had 4,000 pallets of food that spoiled because their power went off at 10am on the Saturday morning, and it wasn’t until the following Saturday morning that they actually started getting into there, and the pallets had been collapsing.

So we actually had a biohazard situation whereby, when they removed those pallets out of the cold storage, they had meat, they had dairy, they had seafood, they had other food products that were all leaching into the stormwater system. So, I ensured that the environmental health officers came out to support what was going on, and I can tell you that that business owner had a lot of damage through there, and four million kilograms of food stock is a lot of food waste.

I would just like to say to the officers from the ADF (Australian Defence Force), thank you for coming out, thank you for working with that business, and certainly supporting them through this very difficult time. I also went around to a number of different businesses throughout that area that run through Medway Street, which runs parallel to Sherwood Road, effectively—and it’s right next door to the Rocklea Fire Station. Even the Rocklea Fire Station was damaged by the flooding. So, there were a lot of people that were in a very difficult position, but to say that the LORD MAYOR wasn’t in the know about what was going on is incorrect. Information was coming through. It takes many hands—

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor OWEN: —to come in and help out, and I can tell you that, fortunately, with the Brisbane Markets, what they managed to do was they managed to get a lot of the produce out on the Friday evening. Fortunately, they did not have the extent of the spoilage that they had in 2011. Now, it is very important that we do look after, particularly, those areas where we do have a lot of food stocks in cold storage, and coming from my previous occupation managing cold stores across a number of sites here in South East Queensland, I know how precarious it can be if you don’t get in and deal with that food spoilage quickly.

So that was what we were trying to do, and it is vital, absolutely vital that we look after our food bowl supplies and that we ensure that people have access to fresh produce as quickly as possible. That is why the Rocklea Markets are so important because they feed so many people through the whole system of the wholesalers supplying the shops out there, and also the major contracts that are in place. We have all of the produce that supplies McDonald’s that goes through the Brisbane Markets, as well.

I’d just like to also point out that the Salvation Army Op Shop, I was also down there and they suffered increasingly severe losses. They had 15,000 items of clothing that all are now unusable, and they didn’t have many volunteers because their volunteers were out doing outreach. You’ve got so many of these stories that people will tell you how they’ve encountered the hardship, and every one, every single story of hardship is valid. Every single one needs to be supported, and it doesn’t matter who it is that goes out and reaches out to them.

The fact is, we had mechanisms in place to go out to try to reach as many people as possible, and that is what is important. It’s not about playing politics. It’s about being on the ground, helping out where you can. I even went down to the Darra depot, and with Councillor MARX, we were helping to sandbag. We were helping people out on the footpath, loading up their cars, filling sandbags, in the pouring rain.

So, for those on the opposite side to say that other people haven’t helped, that is not true. The fact of the matter is that you do need somebody like the LORD MAYOR and the DEPUTY MAYOR coordinating things at a higher level, and that is why it is important that we chip in and did chip in. So, I think sometimes it’s—easy for someone to—

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor OWEN: —cast blame, but we are not about getting into the political fighting here. It is about supporting the residents across Brisbane. The residents need support, the residents need leadership, and the residents need Councillors who are prepared to get in and do the hard work and not just create a song and dance. It is one thing to advocate for your area, and I don’t begrudge that to any Councillor, but don’t decry the efforts of others when you don’t know exactly the extent of what has been going on behind the scenes. I will say this once and for all, that I will always, always stick my hand up to help another Councillor should they ask for help, if my ward is not impacted in the same level, and my ward is—

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor OWEN: —under control, I will always—

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor OWEN: —go to someone if they ask me for help.

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor OWEN: Did you call—well, I’m sorry, there were Councillors—with the Councillors—

*Councillor interjecting.*

Chair: Councillors, please stop interjecting.

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor OWEN: Because—

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor OWEN: The Councillors who asked me for help, I was willing to go out and assist them. So where I was asked to help, I did so. I will not go and just deem that I have got to do X, Y, Z for any other Councillor, but where I am asked to assist, I will always willing—I am always willing to do so for the residents of—

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor OWEN: —Brisbane. So, where I was assisting the LORD MAYOR and the DEPUTY MAYOR and the Chair of City Standards, ground truthing what had happened on the ground, I was more than willing to do so and I will do it again any day of the week for any Councillor who needs help, and that is a standing offer. So, if somebody wishes to come and check with me for assistance in a time of disaster, I will always answer my phone. Even on Sunday night. I had residents in another ward who happened to be flooded in the downpour.

I went out on Sunday night, this most recent Sunday night, to help them, and I would do that again. So I don’t think now is the time to start throwing political barbs around the place. Our focus should always be supporting the residents—

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor OWEN: —of Brisbane and making sure that they come first and their needs must come first in this time of disaster.

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor OWEN: Thank you, Mr Chair.

*Councillors interjecting.*

Chair: Councillor.

Any further speakers?

LORD MAYOR.

LORD MAYOR: Yes, thank you, Mr Chair. Look, it’s really disappointing that Councillor GRIFFITHS seems to think this is some kind of joke and some kind of game.

*Councillors interjecting.*

LORD MAYOR: I am really—

*Councillor interjecting.*

LORD MAYOR: Mr Chair.

Chair: Councillors JOHNSTON and GRIFFITHS, please. You’ve been interjecting continuously. I am asking you now please to stop.

LORD MAYOR: I’m really, really disappointed in what we’ve heard this afternoon. It is really—unfortunately just quite evidently a purely political approach that’s been taken here, and one that really is out of step with the way that all of us should be approaching what is a significant natural disaster for our city and one that has required us to work together, and one that, in the main, most Councillors have been working well together. Now, in particular, I wanted to respond to some of the false accusations and claims that have been made, and disappointing claims that have been made, because they really must be set straight, Mr Chair.

*Councillor interjecting.*

LORD MAYOR: Well, look, I’ll respond to that. The claim of slander—I not sure whether Councillor CASSIDY is referring to what was said earlier or the questions that were raised about Councillor GRIFFITHS’ whereabouts. I am very pleased to hear that Councillor GRIFFITHS has reported that he was in Brisbane the entire time, because we were contacted by residents in his ward who were claiming that he was not only missing in action, but was actually out of the city. Now, I’m glad that he has—

*Councillor interjecting.*

LORD MAYOR: I’m glad that he has confirmed that he was not, but—

*Councillor interjecting.*

Chair: Councillor STRUNK, please.

*Councillors interjecting.*

LORD MAYOR: I did ask him and—

*Councillor interjecting.*

LORD MAYOR: Well—

*Councillor interjecting.*

Chair: Councillor GRIFFITHS.

*Councillor interjecting.*

LORD MAYOR: Oh, really? Mr Chair, I ask that Councillor GRIFFITHS withdraw that comment.

Chair: Councillor GRIFFITHS, will you withdraw please?

Councillor GRIFFITHS: No.

Chair: Councillor GRIFFITHS—

Councillor GRIFFITHS: Just like Councillor ADAMS wouldn’t.

Chair: Councillor GRIFFITHS, you have failed to comply with the request to take remedial action for your unsuitable meeting conduct and I hereby warn you in accordance with subsection 21(6) of the Meetings Local Law. Failing to comply with the request may result in an order being issued.

LORD MAYOR: Mr Chair—

Councillor CASSIDY: Point of order, Chair.

Chair: Point of order, Councillor CASSIDY.

Councillor CASSIDY: The LORD MAYOR has just now, in his last few comments, confirmed that what he said about Councillor GRIFFITHS being away was in fact a lie, or maybe he was mistaken. But either way, he said it and he slandered Councillor GRIFFITHS, so I would ask you to ask him to withdraw those earlier comments.

Chair: Councillor CASSIDY, the LORD MAYOR has said—I heard him say that he was pleased to hear Councillor GRIFFITHS say that he was in town. I believe he’s set the record straight. I believe he’s set—

Councillor CASSIDY: He didn’t withdraw his comments, did he, and he didn’t apologise?

Chair: Councillor CASSIDY, I believe the LORD MAYOR has set the record straight. Thank you.

Councillor CASSIDY: But did he apologise or did he—

Chair: Councillor CASSIDY, I have made my ruling.

Councillor CASSIDY: —for that.

Chair: I have made my ruling. Thank you.

LORD MAYOR.

LORD MAYOR: Some people really show their true colours in a situation like this, and that’s what we’re seeing tonight, Mr Chair.

*Councillors interjecting.*

LORD MAYOR: Three Councillors here really showing their true colours.

*Councillors interjecting.*

LORD MAYOR: Unfortunately, it is disappointing. Now, let me set the record straight. I’ll be very clear. Residents in your ward, Councillor GRIFFITHS, reported to us that you were not in town. I’m glad to hear that you were in town, and I withdraw my previous comments and I apologise for that misunderstanding. I’m glad you have cleared that up, because reality is, we all needed to be full hands on deck, full hands on the wheel in this situation.

So that is a good thing, but the other things that you have said tonight are absolutely unacceptable and outrageous, to be honest. They are just pure scandal and slanderous accusations, scandalous accusations and slanderous accusations, that are nothing but politically motivated. Now, I can also say—

*Councillor interjecting.*

Chair: Councillor GRIFFITHS, please, enough.

*Councillor interjecting.*

Chair: Enough, Councillor GRIFFITHS.

LORD MAYOR: Now, Councillor GRIFFITHS—

*Councillor interjecting.*

LORD MAYOR: —you are not the only Councillor in the Brisbane City Council.

*Councillor interjecting.*

Chair: Councillor GRIFFITHS.

*Councillor interjecting.*

|  |
| --- |
| **Order – Councillor Steve GRIFFITHS**  The Chair then advised Councillor Steve GRIFFITHS that as he had continued to fail to comply with his request for remedial action for his unsuitable meeting conduct, in accordance with section 21(8) of the *Meetings Local Law 2001*, an order reprimanding him for his conduct was being issued. |

LORD MAYOR: Mr Chair—

Councillor JOHNSTON: Point of order, Mr Chair.

Chair: Point of order, Councillor JOHNSTON.

Councillor JOHNSTON: Yes, just to check with that ruling that you’ve just made, the previous order that you made regarding Councillor GRIFFITHS’ conduct in the meeting related to language that he used, and that matter was dealt with. He’s not repeated that language, so this is a new issue of disorderly conduct and—

Chair: Councillor JOHNSTON, his behaviour has been unacceptable and I’ve made my ruling. Thank you.

Councillor JOHNSTON: But you—but just, Mr Chairman, I—

Chair: Councillor JOHNSTON, thank you. Thank—

LORD MAYOR.

LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Mr Chair.

Councillor JOHNSTON: Point of order, Mr Chairman.

Chair: Point of order, Councillor JOHNSTON.

Councillor JOHNSTON: My point here is that, as far as I am aware, this is the matter that came up in a court case, you have to—you can’t treat an act that has been disposed of as an ongoing act. It has to be treated as a new act, and I think that perhaps you have to warn him again before you make the note in the—

Chair: Councillor JOHNSTON, I have warned Councillor GRIFFITHS on numerous occasions to refrain from interjecting, and that was what I warned him about.

*Councillor interjecting.*

Chair: Thank you for your observation.

*Councillor interjecting.*

Chair: Councillor JOHNSTON, I ask you to—

*Councillor interjecting.*

Chair: —that I—Councillor JOHNSTON, you are displaying unsuitable meeting conduct in accordance with section 21(4) of the Meetings Local Law. I hereby request that you refrain from exhibiting this conduct.

Chair: LORD MAYOR. LORD MAYOR.

LORD MAYOR: Okay, we’re good? We can move on?

Chair: Fine with me. You have the floor.

LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Now, Councillor GRIFFITHS, what he’s done is a classic Opposition tactic where he suggests that, oh, he’s the only important one in the whole city. There are 26 Councillors in this city. There were 164 suburbs affected by this rain event that we’ve had and this flood event. There are people all across the city who needed support, and what Councillor GRIFFITHS is saying right now is that everyone else would be ignored and it’s only one group of residents in his ward that are important.

I believe everyone in Brisbane is important, everyone in Brisbane is important, but I can tell you what happened during this event was that I maintained contact with your leader, Councillor GRIFFITHS. In doing so, I asked him how his team was doing and what support his team needed. Now, if there was no communication between yourself and your leader, that is not my problem. That is not something that I can respond to. I do not know what happened internally within your team, but I’m really disappointed in this approach you’ve taken.

Let’s actually go to what really matters here, because what you’re suggesting won’t change a thing. Now, what you have suggested, though, is to bring back the flood buyback. What you have suggested is to extend the Flood Resilient Homes program. Let me respond to those issues which are legitimate and relevant issues.

Firstly we saw just today the Deputy Premier commenting on the Flood Buyback scheme. From what he said—because he was asked about it, whether the State would be interested in this. He made the comment that these programs are incredibly expensive and they displace people. It was not my comments, that was the Deputy Premier’s comments.

We know from the history of the Flood Buyback scheme in Brisbane, in the decade that it was running, that scheme purchased 112 properties. That cost over $50 million for 112 properties. Now what we also know is that only around one in three people that were approached in that scheme actually said yes or was willing to sell. So that means two in three people didn’t want a bar of it. They didn’t want to sell and they didn’t want to go anywhere.

So I think it is actually really problematic to suggest that this is some kind of silver bullet. Sure, flood buyback schemes could be a part of a future approach, they could be one part of it, but to suggest that this is a silver bullet that will solve all of the problems is not the case, is simply not the case.

Chair: LORD MAYOR, your time has expired. Thank you.

We now move to the vote on this report.

Upon being submitted to the Chamber, the motion for the adoption of the report of the Establishment and Coordination Committee was declared **carried** on the voices.

The report read as follows⎯

**ATTENDANCE:**

The Right Honourable, the Lord Mayor (Councillor Adrian Schrinner) (Chair); Deputy Mayor (Councillor Krista Adams) (Deputy Chair); and Councillors Adam Allan, Fiona Cunningham, Tracy Davis, Vicki Howard, Kim Marx, Ryan Murphy and Andrew Wines.

#### A 2022 PARTIAL REBATE OF RATES AND GRANT OF A RATES CONCESSION FOR SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND RAINFALL AND FLOODING EVENT

**173/325/292/6**

**504/2021-22**

1. The A/Divisional Manager, Organisational Services, provided the information below.

2. The South East Queensland Rainfall and Flooding event has resulted in widespread damage to homes and businesses which has caused significant financial loss to these individuals and businesses.

3. In response to the rainfall and flooding event, on 27 February 2022 the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services activated Counter Disaster Operations for Brisbane City Council under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

4. To assist impacted ratepayers, it is proposed that Council provide a rebate of $250 to be applied in relation to rates accounts for the fourth quarter of the 2021-22 financial year for eligible ratepayers adversely impacted by the rainfall or flooding.

5. In addition, a rates concession will be granted for the fourth quarter of 2021-22 financial year to defer the payment of rates and charges to eligible ratepayers where Council is satisfied that the payment of rates and charges would cause hardship. Eligible ratepayers may apply for rates or charges to be deferred for a period of up to 60 days from the due date. No interest will be imposed on rates or charges while there is an agreement in place to defer payment.

6. To be eligible for the above concessions ratepayers must meet the following eligibility criteria.

**Eligibility Criteria:**

1. applicants must be property owners as at 26 February 2022
2. applications may be made in writing or by calling Council’s Customer Contact Centre
3. properties will be eligible where:
   1. Council’s records show that the property is located in an area where flood water has encroached within the boundaries of the land or
   2. other evidence is provided by the ratepayer of significant inundation or rainfall damage
4. for Community Title Scheme (CTS) properties, all owners within a CTS that is on land where flood water has encroached will be eligible for the rebate
5. vacant land or land owned by any government will not be eligible for the rebate
6. applications may be made at any time up to 15 June 2022
7. for deferral of payment of rates Council must be satisfied that payment of rates and charges would cause hardship.

7. Based on a $250 rebate for 30,000 affected properties with 80% lodging applications, it is estimated that the rebate will result in reduced rates revenue of $6 million.

8. It is also proposed to defer the issuing of some rate notices. Rates notices for the April quarter (1 April to 30 June 2022) have already been generated for commercial properties. For any notices not yet generated, it is proposed to defer the issuing of those notices from March 2022 to late April 2022 or early May 2022. The impact on Council’s cash flow and associated interest payments is estimated to be $70,000.

9. These additional concessions complement the existing support which Council provides through partial rebates of rates and charges to eligible pensioners (rates and water) including those experiencing hardship, eligible not-for-profit organisations, not-for-profit kindergartens, JobSeekers and other exemptions from general rating for eligible religious, charitable, educational organisations. In addition Council compassionately works to support residents by extending a ratepayers’ due date and allowing a discount in certain unforeseen circumstances which ratepayers may encounter. Council also encourages early advice of planned demolition on flood affected properties to change the rating category to vacant land and with other rating category changes to ensure any benefit to affected ratepayers can be maximised.

10. The A/Divisional Manager, Organisational Services provided the following recommendation and the Committee agreed.

11. **RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT COUNCIL RESOLVES AS PER THE DRAFT RESOLUTION SET OUT IN ATTACHMENT A**, hereunder.

**Attachment A  
Draft Resolution**

**DRAFT RESOLUTION FOR 2022 PARTIAL REBATE OF RATES AND GRANT OF A RATES CONCESSION FOR SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND RAINFALL AND FLOODING EVENT**

As:

(i) section 112 of the *City of Brisbane Regulation 2012* provides that Council may grant a concession for rates or charges for land only if it is satisfied that:

(a) the payment of rates or charges will cause hardship to the landowner or

(b) the land is owned by an entity whose objects do not include making a profit

(ii) section 113 of the *City of Brisbane Regulation 2012* provides that the concession granted by Council may be in the form of a rebate of all or part of the rates or charges or an agreement to defer payment of the rates or charges

(iii) Council may grant the concession, if the concession is for a rebate or an agreement to defer payment of the rates or charges, only by a resolution granting the concession to a ratepayer who is a member of a stated class of ratepayers

(iv) section 238 of the *City of Brisbane Act 2010* provides that Council may delegate its powers to the Chief Executive Officer of Council, save those required to be made by resolution

then Council:

(i) is satisfied that, for ratepayers who have been impacted by the South East Queensland Rainfall and Flooding event, the payment of rates or charges will cause hardship

(ii) resolves in accordance with section 114(1)(b) of the *City of Brisbane Regulation 2012* to grant a concession to eligible ratepayers meeting the eligibility criteria set out in Table 1 below in the form of a $250 rebate of rates or charges (including the Environmental Management Levy and the Bushland Preservation Levy) for the fourth quarter of 2021‑22 financial year

(iii) resolves in accordance with section 114(1)(b) of the *City of Brisbane Regulation 2012* to grant a concession to eligible ratepayers in the form of an agreement to defer the payment of the rates or charges for the fourth quarter of the 2021-22 financial year for ratepayers meeting the eligibility criteria set out in Table 1 below for 60 days after the due date

(iv) resolves to delegate, pursuant to section 238 of the *City of Brisbane Act 2010,* to the Chief Executive Officer, Council’s powers under section 242 of the *City of Brisbane Act 2010* to enter into agreements with eligible ratepayers to defer the payment of rates or charges for the fourth quarter of the 2021-22 financial year who meet the criteria set out in Table 1 below on the general conditions of delegation set out in Attachment C (submitted on file)

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| **Table 1** |
| Criteria:   * Applicants must be property owners as at 26 February 2022 * Applications may be made in writing or by calling Council’s Customer Contact Centre * Properties will be eligible where:   1. Council’s records show that the property is located in an area where flood water has encroached within the boundaries of the land or   2. Other evidence is provided by the ratepayer of significant inundation or rainfall damage * For Community Title Scheme (CTS) properties, all owners within a CTS that is on land where flood water has encroached will be eligible for the rebate * Vacant land or land owned by any government will not be eligible for the rebate * Applications may be made at any time up to 15 June 2022. * For deferral of payment of rates Council must be satisfied that payment of rates and charges would cause hardship. |

(v) adopts the SEQ Flooding Partial Rebate of Rates and Charges Policy 2021-22 set out in Attachment B (submitted on file)

**ADOPTED**

## PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS:

Chair: Councillors, the next item on the agenda is petitions.

Are there any petitions?

Councillor MATIC.

Councillor MATIC: Mr Chairman, I have one petition of residents in Gould Road at Kelvin Grove in regards to the improvements of bridges connecting Gould Road, Granville Street, and Butterfield Street and Downey Street.

Chair: Thank you.

Further petitions? No further petitions.

May I have a motion for receipt of the petitions please.

Councillor LANDERS

**505/2021-22**

It was resolved on the motion of Councillor Sandy LANDERS, seconded by Councillor Charles STRUNK, that the petition as presented be received and referred to the Committee concerned for consideration and report.

The petition was summarised as follows:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **File No.** | **Councillor** | **Topic** |
| 137/220/594/71 | Peter Matic | Requesting Council improve the existing bridges connecting Gould Road, Herston, to Granville Street, Windsor; and Butterfield Street, Herston, to Downey Street, Windsor, to enhance safety and accessibility for all users. |

## GENERAL BUSINESS:

Chair: General Business.

Councillors are there any statements required as a result of an Office of the Independent Assessor or Councillor Ethics Committee order? No Councillors raising their hand.

General Business.

Councillors—Councillor SRI.

Councillor SRI: Thanks Chair. I wanted to speak briefly on a couple of issues arising from the recent floods and put these on the Mayor’s radar directly but also on the radar of the relevant Chairs. Particularly in terms of issues that are relevant to my ward. I mentioned earlier to say in Question Time the importance of new bus routes to—or improved bus routes to fill gaps caused by the cancellation of the ferries.

I just wanted to reiterate the importance of looking very closely at the 192 bus service in particular. Noting that after the 2011 floods, when the ferries were inoperable after the 2011 floods, that 192 service was increased in frequency. There’s precedent for that, it’s a straightforward change. We need that service to run on weekends and later into week nights and we need it to run more frequently on weekdays. So I would ask the Mayor and Councillor MURPHY to look at that one quite closely.

I’m also mindful that for residents in Kangaroo Point who’ve lost the Mowbray Park ferry terminal at East Brisbane has gone down. We’ve also lost the various ferry services on the Kangaroo Point peninsula. It would seem to me that the 232 bus service is the most logical one to make improvements to, as this will also pick up the catchments of Bulimba and Hawthorne that are really going to be struggling in terms of their loss of ferry access.

So I consider that, again, to be quite a high priority. I’m sure there are other bus routes and public transport services across the city that need to be improved, but those two in particular. I also wanted to emphasise that I know the Mayor has previously announced the free bus loop between West End and South Brisbane. Again this is a really important connection point and given that West End and South Bank have both lost a lot of connectivity with so many ferry terminals out of action, I think there’s a strong case for bringing that free bus loop service forward as well.

If the Mayor is concerned about helping South Bank businesses recover, particularly after the twin impacts of COVID and the floods. Getting that free bus loop service up and running before the new financial year, would be really good. I understand the current—the previous plan had been to introduce that new bus service by July. I would suggest to the Mayor that there’s a really strong case for bringing that forward.

I understand from talking to Council officers that the basics of the service have already been worked out. So LORD MAYOR, I hope you’re listening to this and taking a note of this. Because I think it would really help that precinct bounce back. We’ve obviously been really severely affected by the floods. So improving those transport networks is going to be quite a high priority for the area.

Also wanted to highlight that so far I’m aware of about 25 residents in my ward who’ve been made permanently homeless by the floods. I would be interested to know from other Councillors, if you have the time to flick me a text or send me a message, of what your rough estimate is of people who’ve been made long-term homeless.

So we know that there will be thousands of people who have been forced out of their homes for three, four, five weeks. But I’d be really interested to get a read on what is the long term—how many people have been displaced long term. How many renters won’t be able to return to their homes. How many owner occupiers won’t be able to return to their homes.

I think the Council needs to be collecting that data itself. Rather than leaving that up to the State Government or other entities. Because we know from previous disasters that the human cost in terms of homeless and displacement of often underestimated. I don’t think the Council ever really worked out exactly how many people were made permanently displaced or made homeless by the 2011 floods. I don’t think accurate data was collected. I think this time we need to do a better job of that so as to inform our approach going forward.

Really want to emphasise the importance of providing some accommodation for people, because we know how tight the rental market is at the moment. We know how difficult it’s going to be for people to find alternative accommodation. I do think the Council has a responsibility to step in here.

I think if the Council were to acquire some apartment or flats and turn them into crisis accommodation for people who’ve been displaced by flooding, that doesn’t set a new precedent. That doesn’t undermine the broader principle that the LNP are so keen on that housing is a State and Federal issue. It would be a really good thing for this Council to create some crisis accommodation for people who’ve been displaced by floods.

I also wanted to highlight in terms of the recovery of parks and green spaces around the Gabba Ward. There’s been a long running discussion with Councillor DAVIS and some of the Parks officers and also some of the Active Transport officers in Council about closing off the northern end of Riverside Drive to vehicle access. This is the stretch of Riverside Drive in West End and South Brisbane from Jane Street up to the Go Between Bridge.

The LNP’s own plans for this precinct are that it will eventually close to cars. The Mayor’s been on the record many times saying that. It’s very clear that the long term plan is to take cars off that northern end of Riverside Drive. It’s already designated as parkland and the road doesn’t really lead anywhere. Now I’ve—went through there the other day after the flood waters receded and it’s quite obvious that there’s been very significant damage to that old road surface.

Council officers are going to have a choice now as to whether they spend a lot of money re-doing that road to an extent that it’s designed to carry cars and large vehicles, or whether they restore it just as a bike path. I would very strongly encourage the Mayor and Councillor MURPHY and Councillor DAVIS to take this opportunity to say well look, it’s not worth spending hundreds of thousands of dollars building a new road through a park. When actually we don’t need the road there and we’re planning to close it anyway.

Take that money and instead create a world-class bikeway and pedestrian pathways along that northern stretch to Riverside Drive. We know the Olympics are coming up, we know there’s a lot of other change happening in that area. But I just want to really emphasise, particularly for Councillor DAVIS, it would be a grave error to reopen car access to that northern end of Riverside Drive and to spend a lot of money patching potholes and resurfacing and shoring up that road surface, when that money could be spent better elsewhere.

There’s so many areas that are going to need major road repairs and major works to restore them after this flood. As the local Councillor, I’m saying that this road, Riverside Drive, north of Jane Street is not a priority. We don’t need Council to spend money there restoring it as a road for car access. We just need it restored for bikes and pedestrians. That’s what residents have been saying for years.

The southern end of Riverside Drive was closed off during Councillor Abrahams’ time as a Councillor and it’s been a roaring success. People love having that as a car free space. It’s a much loved riverside parkland and exercise route. So let’s do the same to the northern side of Riverside Drive.

So I’m not sure if Councillor MURPHY’s on the call. I know his officers really want this to happen and there’s been a little bit of lack of clarity around responsibilities between Parks and Active Transport about who gets the say here. The time now—it’s definitely time now to close that precinct off to cars and make it safe for people, because it was a really dangerous environment previously where pedestrians and cyclists were sharing a roadway with fast moving cars. Let’s get the cars out there, the place is flooded anyway.

Similarly on that same note, wanting to highlight the importance of Riverside Drive as an active transport corridor. Councillor MURPHY earlier today announced that there were sort of five major commuter bikeways that were particularly high priorities in terms of reconnecting and reopening. I accept that we’ve got to prioritise those really high use bikeway corridors, but the Riverside Drive bikeway corridor in West End, not only does it carry a lot of commuter cyclists and scooter riders, but it also carries a lot of commuter pedestrians.

I would suggest to the Mayor and to Councillor MURPHY that it would be good to look more closely at their estimated number of pedestrians who use Riverside Drive and that West End riverside parkland as a route in and out of the city. Because I suspect when you add up the pedestrians and cyclists who use that corridor, you’ll see that there’s really high need there. Those pedestrians and cyclists need that connection reopened into the city.

So Councillor MARX, Councillor DAVIS, I know you’ll all be sharing responsibility for how to clean up all that mud off Riverside Drive. It’s going to be a huge job and I appreciate that there are competing priorities across the city, but that West End, Riverside Drive, it’s the local park for 10,000 residents. It’s a major commute corridor for people to get in and out of the city. Right now we have lots of residents choosing to drive from West End, Montague Road, into the CBD. Causing more congestion for people in other parts of the city who really ought to be—they don’t have as many options normally. So they’re stuck driving.

But we don’t want inner city residents driving and clogging up the road network unnecessarily. Right now they’re driving down Montague Road because they can’t walk down Riverside Drive. If you get the mud off Riverside Drive they’ll be able to walk and ride along Riverside Drive again. That will get them out of their cars and free up the road network for other road users. So again, really wanting to emphasise that that ought to be one of the higher priorities in terms of active transport corridors. It’s not just a park, it’s a major bicycle and pedestrian highway.

Finally just wanted to highlight, again, in terms of waste and I guess the overall communication and management over the past few weeks. From my experience as Councillor, this is probably the first significant flood I’ve been through as a Councillor. Communication was really patchy, to be honest. I don’t attribute blame to any one individual officer or Council department for that. but I did really feel like I had to continually be—

Chair: Councillor SRI your time has expired.

Further speakers?

Councillor JOHNSTON.

Councillor JOHNSTON: Yes, thank you I just—I rise to speak a little more on flood issues. I just want to put on the record the problems that are going on with the flood recovery response now. Also put on the record a few things that I’d like to see happen.

Firstly, while Councillor Vicki HOWARD was answering a question today, talking about the $5,000 grants for sports clubs. An issue that I’d taken up with the LORD MAYOR early last week, they don’t actually work. So repeated clubs in the last day or so have contacted my office and told us that the link that they were given was not working.

So in the middle of probably—apart from 2011—the busiest week—second busiest week we’ve ever had in 14 years. We are also following up to find out why the grants announced by the LORD MAYOR, publicly promoted today by Councillor Vicki HOWARD, aren’t working. This is what we’re told today, we’re told that currently there’s a problem with their computer system sending out these surveys with a do not reply address. The clubs’ inboxes are rejecting them.

So they’re compiling a new list and they’re going to reshare the link so that the clubs can apply for the grants. Now let’s be clear, Councillor HOWARD today is out there publicly telling people that these clubs can get money. They’ve had to come back to us, in the middle of their flood recovery, tell us there’s a problem. We’ve had to go back to the Council officers—who know there’s a problem but didn’t tell us there’s a problem.

We’ve had to then tell the clubs that no, no, you can’t apply, even though Council told you you could apply. You can’t actually apply. We’ve stuffed it up and we’re going to have to do something else and fix it up. Maybe you can apply again sometime in the future. That’s what actually was going on while Councillor Vicki HOWARD was publicly saying to everybody that these grants were available. They are not.

That’s like the bins, the food waste bins. When the inquiry happens I can tell you the number one issue is going to be waste. So we were given a list through the LDCC of where the food waste bins were going. So of course we communicated that to our residents who—I think this was probably about Wednesday—were pretty desperate at that point to put the food that had been spoiling for several days into an appropriate waste bin. Well, the effort that went into that defies belief.

First the LDCC said no, we’ve not told you where any of these bins were going. I had to send them the list that they had sent me the day before. Then they said, ‘oh yes, no, they’re not where they are, we couldn’t put them in there’. Which, they could have put them in there but they just you know didn’t do it. They didn’t bother to tell us that the information that they had given us was wrong.

Then they said to us oh but we’re going to put them in and we’re going to put additional bins in. They gave us a list of additional bin sites. Guess what? They did not go on where they said they were going to go then either. That’s on the Thursday. On the Thursday we still didn’t have either of the bins in—oh, I think there were bins—Yeronga Memorial Park, which was nowhere near the flood zone—they actually put bins in there. I thought that was pretty—I have no idea who decided where these bins were going to go.

I mean if someone had have just gone dear Councillor JOHNSTON where do you think the bins should go? I could have banged out the note to where in about two minutes. Guess what? I did that—I did that on the Thursday because we still didn’t have the bins in the right areas where people were cleaning out their houses. Guess what today is? Tuesday. Guess where the bins aren’t? Nowhere near the people who needed them.

When we went through the Flood Review in 2011, one of the biggest issues at that time was what the role of Councillors was supposed to be in a crisis. It actually formed a big part of the discussion. I spoke to the panel and a number of other Councillors did as well. It was—it’s part of our official plan that Councillors’ role is to provide advice and intelligence to the LDCC. That we are recognised as leaders in our community and we’re able to work with the community and with the Council to deliver disaster responses.

Well, I can tell you that I did that. From the very minute the LDCC was stood up, I provided advice and information all the way through. Even while this meeting’s been on I’ve been emailing this afternoon’s issues that I found when I went out in the dinner break. I don’t think that most of the things that I sent through were ever acted upon, I’ll be very interested afterwards to find out exactly what’s happened.

I know that, for example, a simple request for some bins in Logan Avenue in Oxley, one of the worst affected streets in the whole city. I defy even Councillor GRIFFITHS to find somewhere that was as bad as over there. In Fairfield where we had a whole suburb flooded. I can’t understand why a simple request to put bins into areas where the water didn’t go down until Thursday—so the bins could have gone in and people could have put their waste in it in a timely way. Did this Council do one thing that I asked them to do? No, they did not.

The worst part of it is, after spending days and days sending through streets that were flooded, streets that needed help. We are supposed to liaise directly with the LDCC, we’re not supposed to be liaising directly with Council officers, we’re not supposed to be interfering with the way Council runs its disaster response. That is something that I took on board and I respected. We get people like the DEPUTY MAYOR, Krista ADAMS, who sends out a spreadsheet and says you’ve got like a day and a half to tell us every street in your ward that’s flooded. The number, the address, the specifics. You send it back to us so you can get the Mud Army.

Meanwhile we’ve been providing information to the LDCC. It is massively inappropriate the way in which this 2022 flood disaster has been overtly politicised by the LORD MAYOR. I know that he made announcements on Twitter that were not in the LDCC sitrep sent to Councillors. Councillors were finding out things in the media before we were being told about them through our communications structure that is a—

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor JOHNSTON: —dedicated liaison between us and Council.

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor JOHNSTON: Yes. This is the most appalling behaviour, because it disrespects the Flood Review. You can be very sure that these are the things that I’ll be saying to Justice de Jersey.

I’ll leave it with this. About two weeks before the flood I made a complaint to Colin Jensen saying that it’s wrong that Councillors haven’t been included in any of the disaster scenario planning, in any of the practices. Raising issues again, as I’ve done previously in Committees, in Council, to the CEO. Guess what? Two weeks later there’s a giant flood and they treat us like we’re irrelevant. When they treat the Councillors who represent the residents of Brisbane like they’re irrelevant and they do not listen to them. They are treating the residents of Brisbane as if they are irrelevant.

Now I know that there is a problem with the way that that this flood response has been raised and I look forward to putting my concerns in. I say to my community that I am with you, I am doing everything in my power to support you, to make sure that we have the right resources in place. We’re working closely with the community and our community and the residents of the suburbs I represent have been extraordinary.

Into the vacuum created by Council they have again stepped up. They have cared for their neighbours, their friends, their family. They have looked after one another. They’ve gone above and beyond the call of duty.

In finishing, I must thank Melinda McInturff and her team at Yeronga Community Centre. We did it all together in 2011 and we’re doing it again in 2022. She, Billy and her team of volunteers at the Yeronga Community Centre, I mean thank God we have them as a local resource in my ward. They are truly remarkable and I’m so very grateful for them. Also want to thank Councillor GRIFFITHS. Obviously you know we are friends and it’s been really good to have someone to talk to who knows what this is like, who’s been thought it before as well.

Chair: Councillor JOHNSTON your time has expired.

Councillor JOHNSTON: Thank you.

Chair: Further speakers?

Yes, Councillor LANDERS.

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| **506/2021-22**  At that time, 8.49pm, it was resolved on the motion of Councillor Sandy LANDERS, seconded by Councillor Sarah HUTTON, that the meeting adjourn for a period of 15 minutes, to commence only when all Councillors had vacated the Chamber and the doors had been locked.  Council stood adjourned at 8.50pm. |

**UPON RESUMPTION:**

Chair: Thank you Councillors.

Further speakers in General Business?

Councillor ATWOOD.

Councillor ATWOOD: Thank you, Chair. I rise tonight to speak about the 2022 floods in the Doboy Ward. I wanted to share some stories and also thank a few unsung heroes. When we all left for work on the Friday afternoon, I’m very sure that none of us were expecting 800 ml in the coming days.

On Friday night I was really worried about residents in Hemmant as it’s a low‑lying flood plain and the water rises really quickly. But on Saturday morning when I was driving around, it appeared a lot worse than what we all had thought. On Saturday morning I drove down to Billan Street in Carina and I saw the residents being ferried over the flood waters by the SES (State Emergency Service) and the firefighters getting out of there—with their pets as well. It was, yes quite confronting and really, really heartbreaking to see.

So Billan Street, Carina, it had turned it into a little island. They had no power and many residents actually chose to stay as well. Those with double-storey homes or those who weren’t in the actual flood waters, but the community spirit was honestly amazing. Those with kayaks made their way to check on each other, their neighbours and to help them how they could. Friends, family and local businesses donated food, water, ice and generators, which was taken over in a boat, which was so generously donated by John Crawford Marine in Tingalpa.

In defiance of isolation, the street set up a few marquees in the few short metres of road that hadn’t gone under. They came together for barbecues and socialisation as they waited for the waters to go down. Once the waters had subsided, on the Monday morning, Billan Street residents assessed the damage and began the process of cleaning up. Each person looking out for each other.

Actually one of the families was overseas, they’d lost everything, but also lost their brand new Mercedes Benz, they were not happy, Jan. But all the neighbours got stuck in, they cleaned out their entire house, put everything on the kerb and cleaned and Gerni’d the entire inside of their house.

I also wanted to thank Lane. Lane is a local electrician, he lives on Billan Street. I learnt that morning, Lane explained the process that Energex have to work through to turn all the residences—home—the power back on, because their meter boxes went under water. There was a three-step process between Energex and electricians. I did a call out on Facebook for some sparkies, they came to the rescue and Lane coordinated it all. Within a few hours we had everyone’s power back on, it was really amazing.

On the Tuesday, a resident who owns an earth-moving company took it upon himself to get in there and to clean it all up, put it in his own tip truck and take it to the Chandler weigh station. By Tuesday afternoon it was looking amazing. The Living Church provided a barbecue and helped residents clean up also. The LORD MAYOR came down to hear the residents’ stories and the Brisbane Lions also came down to play footie with the kids. It was honestly just such an amazing afternoon and the residents were so, so happy.

I also wanted to make special mention to Ross Vasta and his team, they were out doorknocking every day last week and helping residents move items out on the kerb and clean their homes. HelloFresh donated about 100 meal boxes to flood affected families in my area. Scott from Ray White Real Estate for going door to door and also helping residents all week last week.

So whilst as an experience I would never, ever throw it upon my worst enemy, the community spirit in Doboy ward has been inspirational. I also want to sincerely thank our LORD MAYOR for appointing former Governor Paul de Jersey to review the recent floods. So we can continue to improve our city and be better prepared for whatever comes next. Thank you.

Chair: Thank you, Councillor ATWOOD.

Further speakers?

Councillor GRIFFITHS.

Councillor GRIFFITHS: Okay, thank you Mr Mayor—oh Mr Mayor—Mr Speaker. I just have—

Chair: I’m Chair.

Councillor GRIFFITHS: —a few issues I’d like to cover in General Business, but obviously relating to flooding. I think the first one—and I can’t see the Mayor on the screen, so I assume he’s gone. But the first one I really want to get an answer for, for residents, so that I can tell them and let them see the Mayor’s response, is LORD MAYOR will you come and meet with me and residents in Rocklea and Archerfield to discuss flooding? That’s the first question. So if the Mayor could answer that, that would be good, because I’m happy to share that with residents and share his response with them.

The second thing I’d like to put to the Mayor, is—and once again this gets back to my point that I’ve raised throughout the day, is the lack of leadership from this Administration and this Mayor. The lack of genuine leadership. A dump was set up in Acacia Ridge at C.A. O’Sullivan Park and it borders residents’ properties. So we were actually dumping piles of waste that have—because we didn’t get the waste bins—we have actual waste next to residents’ properties and it’s building up against their fence.

They’re angry and annoyed and I’m even more angry and annoyed because no one from Council contacted me to discuss whether they thought this was a reasonable thing to do. Surely everyone in this Chamber, as I talk about this issue would go, surely that’s not happening. Well it is and all you’ve got to do is go to C.A. O’Sullivan Park at Acacia Ridge. Once again, I put it to the LORD MAYOR—I wrote to you yesterday LORD MAYOR, what are you going to do about it? Why didn’t you communicate with me and when are you going to clean it up? Because this isn’t fair on residents and it’s just wrong.

The third thing I’d like to raise is really about today’s behaviour. I was somewhat shocked that the LORD MAYOR made an accusation against a Councillor, which was me, that I was away for a weekend when the floods were on. But he picked up that accusation, I know it was put out there on social media by a fellow Councillor in—who has since removed it from her page.

But I find that very, very unethical. I find it’s contrary to what the Liberal Party nationally says should be going on with behaviour of politicians. In fact what all Federal politicians are saying is inappropriate behaviour. I know I hear many rumours about all the other Councillors on this screen, but I don’t go to Facebook and create a fake profile and then repeat it. Or I don’t come into the Chamber, like the LORD MAYOR did, and repeat a fake accusation like that, or a lie like that and expect it to get traction. So I’m just—

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor GRIFFITHS: I am, I am really perturbed about the LORD MAYOR’s behaviour.

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor GRIFFITHS: I think we know who it is. Yes, I’m really perturbed about the LORD MAYOR’s behaviour and I think this is—it shows for the leadership of this city it’s actually not about getting the best results for residents. It’s about undermining and putting each other down. I’m happy to have a fight with any of you in relation to residential stuff and I’ll do it in the Chamber and I’ll tell it to your face.

But my experience with your Administration is that you guys go behind the back, you do it sneakily. You do it through many other ways, rather than actually do it in a way that’s straightforward and it’s just revolting. It’s really ugly and reflects on you, but also the staff—you mightn’t think it but the staff know it and they see it. They have really have so little respect for you.

So I don’t think you have any idea what you’re doing when you do that, because people know it’s not true. Anyway, that’s all I’ve got to say, thank you.

Chair: Thank you.

Councillor HUANG.

Councillor HUANG: Oh yes, thank you, Mr Chair. I just would like to take this opportunity to talk about the impact of the recent storm event in MacGregor Ward. Fortunately, MacGregor Ward is one of the wards that is less affected by the recent storm event and also the floods. I always remember back in 2013 when there was a flash flood and Bulimba Creek actually flooded a few streets in MacGregor.

I did a site visit after that 2013 flood and realised the reason being that’s where Bulimba Creek meets Mimosa Creek. So when there is this heavy rain inevitably cause the overflow from the waterway. So since then, every time when there’s a heavy rain like this I always just go and check on the water level, take photos and remind the local residents to stay safe.

But also since 2013 at every year’s budget bid I always put in a budget request for the waterway remediation and also rehabilitation. If—we did it year by year and it is something people probably don’t notice when there’s no flood or water—when there wasn’t a storm event, but this time it proves that with a good plan to work on the waterways we can avoid the flood in these creeks.

So I was proud to say that during the rainy day—the weekend, I visit the creek and I ran into an elder gentleman, he recognised me and thank me for—your clean-up of the creek, because since we started that water way rehabilitation, there was no flood after that. After the storm event, after the flood had gone, I visited the creek again. There weren’t any debris in that waterway. So how it had actually worked.

So I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Council’s Asset Services for doing an outstanding job. I’d like to thank LORD MAYOR and also the successive Finance Chair for supporting my budget bid in waterway rehabilitation.

I also would like to take this opportunity to—just to remind people that it is now safe in MacGregor Ward. But I also saw young people was playing in the water with surfboards and that’s something I feel dangerous and I think it is important that we also educate the young people that whilst it looks fun but it is actually dangerous. So I wouldn’t suggest that at all. So once again I would like to thank the Council’s Asset Services for their good work in maintaining our waterway. Thank LORD MAYOR and the successive Finance Chair for supporting my budget bid.

This year I’m still putting in that budget line item in by budget bid. To make sure that we don’t get flooded any more in MacGregor Ward. Thank you.

Chair: Any further speakers, General Business? No?

Thank you Councillors, I declare the meeting closed.

## QUESTIONS OF WHICH DUE NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN:

*(Questions of which due notice has been given are printed as supplied and are not edited)*

**Submitted by Councillor Steve Griffiths (received on 3 March 2022)**

**Q1.** Provide a list of all the dates and times text messages were sent to residents to provide warnings/alerts during the recent Major South East Queensland Rainfall and Flooding event.

**Q2.** Provide a list of all Councillors/ Ward Offices which were not receiving Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC) situation reports as the South East Queensland Rainfall and Flooding event from Sunday 27th February until the morning of Monday 28th February.

**Q3.** List all locations where backflow devices were installed by Council in the following financial years, including the number installed per location:-

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **FINANCIAL YEAR** | **LOCATION** | **NUMBER OF BACKFLOW DEVICES INSTALLED PER LOCATION** |
| 2016-2017 |  |  |
| 2017-2018 |  |  |
| 2018-2019 |  |  |
| 2019-2020 |  |  |
| 2020-2021 |  |  |
| 2021-2022 |  |  |

**Q4.** List all properties purchased by Council as part of the flood buy-back scheme for the following financial years:-

| **FINANCIAL YEAR** | **ADDRESS** | **SUBURB** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2016-2017 |  |  |
| 2017-2018 |  |  |
| 2018-2019 |  |  |
| 2019-2020 |  |  |
| 2020-2021 |  |  |
| 2021-2022 |  |  |

**Q5.** How much revenue has Brisbane City Council received as a result of the Queensland Government’s 10‑cent drink container refund scheme.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **FINANCIAL YEAR** | **REVENUE** |
| 2018-2019 |  |
| 2019-2020 |  |
| 2020-2021 |  |
| 2021-2022 (to date) |  |

**Q6.** How is the revenue from the Queensland Government’s 10-cent drink container refund scheme used?

**Q7.** What is the percentage split between the contractors operating Brisbane’s Materials Recycling Facilities (MRF) at the Resource and Recovery Centres of the revenue from the Queensland Government’s 10‑cent drink container refund scheme.

**Q8.** How many homes has Brisbane City Council offered as emergency accommodation under the Community Housing Partnership Project for each of the following financial years:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **FINANCIAL YEAR** | **NUMBER OF HOMES** |
| 2013-2014 |  |
| 2019-2020 |  |
| 2020-2021 |  |
| 2021-2022 (to date) |  |

## ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS OF WHICH DUE NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN:

*(Answers to questions of which due notice has been given are printed as supplied and are not edited)*

**Submitted by Councillor Steve Griffiths (from meeting on 1 March 2022)**

**Q1.** Provide a breakdown of the amount spent to promote the Brisbane City Council Annual Budget for each of the following financial years:-

| **BUDGET PROMOTION** | **2018-2019** | **2019-2020** | **2020-2021** | **2021-2022** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Television advertising |  |  |  |  |
| Flyers delivered to households |  |  |  |  |
| Social Media advertising |  |  |  |  |
| Digital advertising |  |  |  |  |
| Newspaper advertising |  |  |  |  |
| Radio Advertising |  |  |  |  |
| Other |  |  |  |  |
| **TOTAL** |  |  |  |  |

***A1.*** *Many corporate communication officers have been allocated to assist with the communication efforts towards the recent flooding event. As such, they have advised they do not have the resources available to answer this question within the timeframe required by the Meetings Local Law 2001.*

**Q2.** Provide a breakdown of the total cost of Brisbane Metro promotional items, and the quantities ordered.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **BRISBANE METRO PROMOTIONAL ITEM** | **TOTAL COST** | **QUANTITY PURCHASED** |
| Brisbane Metro bag |  |  |
| Brisbane Metro pen |  |  |
| Brisbane Metro jigsaw puzzle |  |  |
| Brisbane Metro cardboard model |  |  |
| Other (please itemise) |  |  |
| **TOTAL** |  |  |

***A2.***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***BRISBANE METRO PROMOTIONAL ITEM*** | ***TOTAL COST*** | ***QUANTITY PURCHASED*** |
| *Brisbane Metro bag* | *$32,131* | *12,500* |
| *Brisbane Metro pen* | *$3900* | *10,000* |
| *Brisbane Metro jigsaw puzzle* | *$10,000* | *5000* |
| *Metro fold-up model* | *$16,865.64* | *20,000* |
| *Other (please itemise)* |  |  |
| *Banners for information stand* | *$325.30* | *2* |
| *Flags for information stand* | *$639.10* | *2* |
| *Branded cover for information stand* | *$261.99* | *1* |
| ***TOTAL*** | ***$64,123.03*** |  |

**Q3.** Provide details on how the Brisbane Metro promotional items are being used.

***A3.*** *Much like other major infrastructure projects underway in Brisbane, Brisbane Metro’s promotional items are used to support community and stakeholder engagement events.*

**Q4.** List all forms of promotion and advertising for the Summer Always campaign, including a full breakdown of costs and which markets they have appeared in.

***A4.*** *The Summer Always campaign is being run by the Brisbane Economic Development Agency (BEDA). BEDA is a separate entity to Council and as such, Council does not hold this information.*

**Q5.** Provide a breakdown of all costs relating to the intersection upgrade works at Raymont and Grange Roads undertaken in the 2017-2018, 2018-2019 and 2019‑2020 financial years.

***A5.***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | ***2017/18*** | ***2018/19*** | ***2019/20*** |
| ***Transport Planning and Operations*** | *$978* | *$11,366* | *$5,679* |
| ***Project Management and Design*** | *$245,383* | *$318,333* | *$528,757* |
| ***Land Acquisition*** | *$767,120* | *$25,579* | *$16,505* |
| ***Public Utilities Plant Relocations*** | *$81,120* | *$960,895* | *$1,251,010* |
| ***Construction*** | *$0* | *$678,640* | *$3,070,127* |
| ***Corporate Overheads*** | *$112,051* | *$255,177* | *$681,732* |

**Q6.** As an Arterial Road in the Brisbane City Council’s Road Hierarchy, advise whether there is sufficient corridor space to allow for the entire length of Rickertt Road to increase from one traffic lane to two traffic lanes in each direction following the installation of the traffic signals at Chelsea Road and bikeway.

***A6.*** *Yes. Council is ensuring there is sufficient corridor space.*

**RISING OF COUNCIL: 9.15pm.**

**PRESENTED: and CONFIRMED**

**CHAIR**

**Council officers in attendance:**

Victor Tan (Council and Committee Coordinator)

Dorian Maruda (A/Council and Committee Officer)