

YOUR SAY

The best reader comments from print and online

Army of helpers battle flooding



MY SAY
FRAZER PEARCE
EDITOR

AS WE get over the 8.9m Rockhampton flood I want to commend and thank all the emergency services workers, police, council staff, defence personnel and volunteers for their outstanding efforts in assisting our community through the past two weeks.

There is no doubt this has been a very well managed flood disaster.

I say disaster because it will have cost us millions of dollars in damage and lost business.

Some residents will call it an inconvenience and others will not have even noticed the impact on the city other than reading about it in the paper or online.

But the thousands of people at the wet end of the brown tide will have all appreciated the huge effort put in by the small army of helpers who swarmed into the flood zones to protect, to assist and to even save when required.

You couldn't help but notice the strong police presence anywhere near flooded areas, particularly around the road closed signs. No doubt a few drivers are still regretting their decision to ignore the blunt warnings about the penalty points for going beyond the barrier – which equated to a fine in excess of \$700.

But it only takes a few of those tickets to be handed out to show that this is serious business and the do-not-cross sign wasn't just a gentle suggestion.

The police chopper (PolAir) was also a welcome sight across the city.

It provided a highly visible show of security for citizens who already had enough anxiety to deal with regarding the threat of flood damage to their property.

Thanks again, and to all, have a safe Easter.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Easter is about healing, not just chocolate

IT HAS proved to be an interesting week leading up to Easter.

While on holiday, I went to Kmart and was surprised by the slogan at the entrance to the store, encouraging me to Make More of Easter!

Really? Presumably Kmart wants me to buy more chocolate Easter eggs, but I already have a weight problem, so I'll rule that one out.

Alternatively, I could buy a set of bunny ears to wear to entertain the grandchildren. They wouldn't make me put on weight.

But seriously, how can I make more of Easter? And

why would I even try?

It is about Jesus Christ. Remember him?

Each year we throw parties around December 25 to celebrate his coming into the world.

Easter is the reason we get so excited about Christmas, because Easter is about His greatest achievement to date.

There's more to come. We haven't seen the last of Him, but just for now ... How does forgiveness sound?

And healing for broken people, living broken lives in a broken world?

— Nancy Chandler Emerald



FAITHFUL: An Ethiopian woman prays at the Ethiopian church of Deir Al Sultan next to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the Old City of Jerusalem. PHOTO: ATEF SAFADI

Barnaby please share your lollies

WE are becoming accustomed to the childlike behaviour of our politicians in parliament.

But please Barnaby, stop behaving like a spoiled brat and share your lollies with the unfortunate Queenslanders requiring financial assistance after the recent cyclone.

— Dennis Pickard Keppel Sands

CQ health boss proud as punch of staff

BLACKWATER Hospital in particular had a tough few days when they were isolated.

When Rockhampton Hospital staff who live on

We had some staff bringing swags to work ready to wait out the flood where they were needed

the Capricorn Coast couldn't get to work because of road cuts, they went to Yeppoon Hospital to do what they could there.

We had some staff bringing swags to work ready to wait out the flood where they were needed, rather than staying at home with their families.

Our patient travel teams saw a huge increase in calls and worked exceptionally hard to help rearrange travel for our patients.

Our building and engineering teams were fantastic in their response to help our hospitals and health centres stay open.

Our operational teams worked throughout the cyclone and floods to help keep our services running.

Our clinical teams across Central Queensland were amazing in how they kept every one of our hospital and community health services running throughout this challenging period for our community.

This level of commitment is to be commended. I urge anyone in the

community with a special story about one of our staff members or teams to nominate them for our Staff Recognition Award.

Nominate for the Triple M CQ Health Community (People's Choice) Award at www.health.qld.gov.au/cq/cqhealth-awards

I would also like to thank our emergency services colleagues and health-care partners for sharing their expertise, commitment and skills with our staff to work together for a great result for Central Queensland.

I hope the community is as proud as I am of the fantastic service they receive from this incredible team.

— Steve Williamson, CEO, CQHHS

The Donald doing just what he said

YOU can easily tell who is driving the world's agenda, can't you?

The Donald has Russia, North Korea and Syrian leaders sh***ing themselves in big heaps.

He simply does what he says he's going to do, then tells them that he and the USA don't get along with them, tells them he doesn't like them, and then asks them, "What are you gonna do about the mess you caused?" He's a classic.

And along the way he tells China to give Kim Jong-un a chill pill, or he'll have to give them a bomb or two.

This is a guy who is ruthless with enemies,

Flood talk needs to make



THE FRENCH LESSON
DAVID FRENCH

THIS month, what other topic than the Rockhampton floods. A perennial issue really – one that's been in my mind since that last day of 1969, when we arrived in this fair city.

You don't remember a great deal at six years old, but aside from finding the odd shilling, a key memory is dad looking for a house that would not get flooded. We ended atop Frenchville Hill, in a modest but architect designed house

paid for in cash, complete with dead roses in the backyard.

The hill and the dead roses provide a window into the history of our river. Coming from Sydney, dad must have been sufficiently aware of the floods to seek "higher ground", and the roses were dead, because in 1969 the city was in the depths of drought, and the barrage had not yet been built. As summer's blooming Poincianas still attest, the barrage in one fell swoop turned Rockhampton from a dust bowl into something of a tropical oasis. The flood issue continues however, to resurface, time and time again.

There can be no question that the Yeppen South

project is a huge boon not only to Rockhampton, but to the Capricorn Coast as well. The temporary redirection of traffic may not have been perfect, but hey, it was the first time, it worked, and every working test presents an opportunity for improvement. The simple fact that the road remained open is a cause for celebration.

Another cause for celebration is the prevention of flooding in Berserker. This was also well executed, and a credit to those involved.

But let's not get too cocky. The floods themselves, the national media portrayal of Rockhampton as flood-bound, the over-generous use by

politicians, public servants and the media of words like "catastrophe" and "calamity", and the closure of the airport are not cause for celebration. In fact, they are explicitly and deeply damaging for individuals, business and the prosperity and investability of our region. In town, the management of floods is very, very expensive. There are so many people involved at all levels – planning, undertaking protection and recovery measures, the army and even PolAir (how low do you have to be to loot somebody's flood affected property – is that even human?). But it's not just flood management, it's the impact on business too. While there are some

winners, the situation for most is that economic activity dries up right before their eyes. Consider paying two weeks of wages and other expenses, against an 80 per cent drop in revenue. Consider all the casuals "stood down" until the flood passes. These negative effects are exacerbated through the multiplier effect, and aside from grants, the money will never be recovered and some businesses will fail. The conclusion is pretty obvious – as far as the town levy goes, the verdict is in – build it – now.

Which leaves the airport. Many wax lyrical about our airport – runway capacity, ease of access, potential as a freight hub for fresh