



Speech by

**Dr LESLEY CLARK**

**MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER**

---

Hansard 14 September 1999

#### **EAST TIMOR**

**Dr CLARK** (Barron River—ALP) (10.21 a.m.): I join the Premier and other members who have spoken this morning to highlight the tragedy occurring in East Timor. Australians across our nation are outraged and appalled at the slaughter of innocent, defenceless men, women and children in East Timor at the hands of the militia, aided and abetted by the Indonesian police and military. The news that Indonesia will allow a UN peacekeeping force into East Timor is welcome, but clearly many more innocent people are going to be killed before that force arrives, their only crime being to support the independence of their homeland from Indonesia.

In far-north Queensland feelings are running high and the Cairns East Timor Support Association was formed on the weekend by members of the local East Timorese community and Cairns residents with the support of the Timorese National Resistance Council in response to the tragic events which have occurred in East Timor since East Timor voted for independence earlier this month. One of the CETSA's first actions will be to hold a public rally today at City Place at 5.30 p.m. The East Timorese need Australian support at this time and a big attendance today at the rally will send a powerful message to Jakarta and Canberra that the recent events in East Timor are totally unacceptable. I am extremely regretful that I will be unable to attend that rally this afternoon to show my solidarity with the East Timorese people.

In common with many Australians, I feel a terrible sense of powerlessness and helplessness as I watch the TV images and the destruction of East Timor and its people. However, there is something that Australians can do. Money will be needed to provide for the food and medicine for people hungry and dying in the mountains, to support the refugees who fled East Timor with nothing, and obviously to reconstruct cities such as Dili that have been destroyed. The Cairns East Timor Support Association, which is a non-political humanitarian organisation, is seeking donations. I have gladly accepted a request to be a co-signatory to its fundraising account. Moneys will be provided at the appropriate time to an aid agency to ensure that money will go where it is most needed. I do urge the people of Cairns to attend the rally this afternoon and to provide that support that the East Timorese so desperately need at this time.

Time expired.

---