



Speech by

**Dr LESLEY CLARK**

**MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER**

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Hansard 2 March 2000

### **CYCLONE STEVE**

**Dr CLARK** (Barron River—ALP) (7.08 p.m.): Cyclones are a regular feature of life in far-north Queensland. We expect them and we prepare for them. I have experienced Cyclones Winifred, Joy, Justin and Rona, but until Steve arrived in Cairns on Sunday night I have never personally experienced the real fear that comes from believing that one's roof is about to be ripped off or a tree will crash through one's house. As it was, our fears were not realised. We retained our roof and the huge tree which fell into our garden, bringing down power poles, inflicted only minor damage on my house and car.

However, daylight revealed the full impact of the fury of Cyclone Steve, when there was not a single large tree left standing in our previously beautiful small street, which was completely blocked by a tangled mass of vegetation and had no power and no water. I do not wish to dwell on my experience, because we were the lucky ones. Not so the many people in my electorate and the neighbouring electorates of Cairns and Tablelands, whose homes and businesses were destroyed. However, I believe that my experience has enabled me to better understand the emotional trauma that cyclone victims experience. They are not statistics, but real people with real lives that can be destroyed totally or changed forever by the savage fury of nature.

As always, the Cairns City Council, Ergon and Emergency Services swung into action and the clean-up is well under way. Power has been restored to almost all houses, and I look forward to going home to a hot shower tomorrow.

However, much more remains to be done to get life back to normal. For some, the personal and financial loss will take many years to overcome and put behind them. Notwithstanding that, I wish to place on record my thanks and the thanks of all of those victims of Cyclone Steve to all of the workers of the Cairns City Council, Ergon and the State Emergency Service volunteers who have and who still are working tirelessly on our behalf to repair the damage inflicted on our community by Cyclone Steve.

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