



Speech by

# Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Thursday, 25 May 2006

---

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Cyclone Larry, General P Cosgrove

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.44 am): This morning at 11.30 will be a special occasion when General Peter Cosgrove formally addresses the parliament. The general has done a terrific job, a magnificent job, helping communities recover and rebuild from the devastating effects of the category 5 cyclone which hit far-north Queensland earlier this year. He will outline the role of the Operation Recovery Task Force, as well as spell out progress being made in helping families, business and industry get back on their feet.

The task force has also developed a range of strategic documents that set out plans to negotiate the continuing complex task of assisting affected communities. The documents identify how the task force and supporting organisations will need to transform in both the short and long term to meet the changing demands of the recovery process. They establish a series of milestones and target time frames for the recovery process and detail the respective tasks and responsibilities of supporting agencies.

Interaction between these groups is clearly articulated in a separate governance document. The documents will assist and guide the task force in the recovery process. They clearly demonstrate the high level of planning and coordination in place across state and local governments and community organisations to assist with the recovery effort. Importantly, they give confidence to community and industries in the future of this important region. I table the documents for the information of the House.

*Tabled paper:* Letter dated 10 May 2006 from General Peter Cosgrove to Mr Beattie relating to Cyclone Larry Operation Recovery Task Force plans.

I am also pleased to announce that we will shortly hold a function in Innisfail to pay tribute to the efforts of emergency service workers helping in the rebuilding and recovery process after Cyclone Larry. The function will include a barbecue for emergency service workers and their families as well as local entertainment. Further details on the event will be published in local newspapers closer to the event.

On other news related to the cyclone, I am sure that everyone would be aware that we were looking at the option of a concert at Suncorp Stadium in June for the Cyclone Larry Relief Appeal. We asked Ogden IFC, as the operators of Suncorp Stadium, to investigate this possibility for us. Unfortunately, the combination of the absence of Australian artists overseas during the northern summer and the limited number of dates that the stadium is available due to sporting activities planned has meant that it has not been possible to put together an event that would produce a significant contribution to the fund.

However, it was recently announced that music megastar Robbie Williams will be performing at Suncorp Stadium later this year. Today I am pleased to announce that the Major Sports Facilities Authority, which operates Suncorp Stadium, has agreed to forego rental payments for the Robbie Williams concert on the basis that they would have otherwise made the stadium available at no cost for the purpose of staging the Cyclone Larry benefit concert. This is expected to raise an additional \$250,000 for the Cyclone Larry Relief Appeal. These funds will be directly injected into the appeal and will contribute to the ongoing rebuilding efforts of the devastated communities in the affected region.

The permission for the Robbie Williams concert has been granted under very strict guidelines, including measures to manage noise, lighting, traffic, transport, parking and crowd behaviour. In recognition of their proximity to the stadium, I am also pleased to announce that Robbie Williams and his team have agreed to provide a priority booking period for local residents for the concert scheduled for 13 December this year. Local residents will be able to buy up to six seats during a special preferential period on 2 and 3 June. This is well in advance of sales being opened up to the general public, which will not occur until Wednesday, 7 June. So the locals will be given priority, and I know the member for Mount Coot-tha, who has been briefed on this, is supportive of this proposal. I am advised that a letter is being sent to all local residents in which they will be advised on how to take advantage of this offer. Tickets will be limited to six per transaction to ensure that as many local residents as possible are able to attend the concert.

We are working hard to ensure that the impact on local residents of any concerts at Suncorp Stadium is minimised. I thank Robbie Williams and his promoters for their show of goodwill, and I hope that local residents are able to take advantage of this unique opportunity. While I am disappointed that the benefit concert will not proceed, I am delighted that residents in the cyclone affected region will receive more funding as a result of the Robbie Williams concert to help in the recovery process.

In fact, on top of the thousands of generous donations received from individuals and businesses, I believe approximately 15 concerts have been held in support of the victims of Cyclone Larry. In total nearly \$19 million has been raised so far through the Cyclone Larry Relief Appeal, and every dollar will help rebuild communities hit hard by one of the worst natural disasters in our nation's history. I table a news release issued today by Ogden IFC for the information of members.

*Tabled paper:* Media release by Suncorp Stadium, dated 25 May 2006 titled *Cyclone Larry Concert not to proceed*.