



Speech by

**Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk**

**MEMBER FOR INALA**

Hansard Wednesday, 7 October 2009

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## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Pacific Island and Indonesian Communities**

**Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs) (10.13 am): As the Minister for Disability Services, I, too, would like to welcome members of the deaf community to Parliament House. I would also like to advise the House that last week I approved \$20,000 for the provision of interpreter services for an international conference on deaf services to be held this year.

As multicultural affairs minister, today I will be meeting at Parliament House with leaders from Queensland's Pacific Island and Indonesian communities. The Bligh government is getting right behind these communities as they come to terms with last week's devastating natural disasters. Many Queenslanders from these communities have lost loved ones in these tragedies, and others fear for injured and missing relatives.

I want to assure these communities that the Bligh government is working with them. We will stand by them in their time of need and give them the support they need to get their lives back on track. These vibrant communities form a vital part of Queensland's strong multicultural identity, and they contribute to the state's ongoing prosperity.

The Premier has asked me to lead a whole-of-government effort to support local Queensland communities affected by the disasters. Representatives from Emergency Services Queensland, the Red Cross and my department's community recovery unit will attend today's meeting. They will update community leaders on Queensland's disaster relief efforts and the local support services available for affected families. I have appointed Mr Arti Mamoe as a dedicated liaison officer to support the local Pacific Island community.

We have already set up a network of neighbourhood centres to help communities get the support they need. Ten are up and running at existing community centres around South-East Queensland. On Monday I attended one of these centres, at Inala Community House, which is in my electorate of Inala. Today I am happy to announce that we are expanding this network to a further 29 locations across Queensland, in Far North Queensland, North Queensland, Central Queensland and the Wide Bay-Burnett. Staff will be available at these centres to help those affected get their lives back on track.

Community leaders and churches will link people from their communities with these centres. The centres will provide assistance with translation, culturally appropriate support and advice about how to access other services such as counselling. I also insisted that brochures outlining the key support services available to these communities be translated into Samoan, Tongan and Indonesian.

In addition to this, my department is working with Education Queensland to ensure children can access the appropriate support they need at school. Our message is very clear to all Queensland communities affected by these terrible disasters—that is, we will stand by you. The government, along with all Queenslanders, will help you through these very difficult times.