



Speech by

John-Paul Langbroek

MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

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PACIFIC ISLANDS TSUNAMI AND INDONESIAN EARTHQUAKE, MOTION TO TAKE NOTE

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.40 am): It is my pleasure to rise to speak in support of the motion moved by the Premier about these terrible tragedies in Tonga, Samoa, Indonesia and the Philippines and the typhoon in Vietnam that have affected hundreds of people, and thousands of people in terms of death in Indonesia. We do not usually deal much with foreign affairs in this parliament. We usually speak about the affairs of the great state of Queensland, but I think it shows just how the world has become a village. In this modern age of communications, we have become very aware of issues that occur in other places that in olden times we would not have heard about for some days or weeks after.

The confluence of events last week was a great tragedy. The opposition and the whole parliament want to pass on our condolences and support to those Australians who had family members who were affected and also to the people in those countries who were badly affected, as we have seen so graphically on the news. Over the last couple of generations, as migration has increased and as the relationships that many of us have with the Asia-Pacific region have matured, we have seen many more people from those communities come to our country.

I was privileged to be part of a Pacific parliamentary dialogue a couple of years ago with the former member for Redlands where we met with members from Samoa and Tonga and heard about the issues affecting their countries. I think it is very important that we acknowledge that we do not want to work with other jurisdictions on just parliamentary procedure but also on social issues and humanitarian issues that have affected these communities. Acknowledging that our world is a village, we should work with them in times of trouble. That is why it was so great, as the Premier has said, to see on the news the emergency services officers, the doctors, the nurses, the paramedics, firefighters and members of the Defence Force rallying into the Hercules to get these supplies there. Contributions from our country and our state really should be acknowledged. I want to express my pride and the pride of all of us in our search and rescue service, which provided 36 people to Indonesia and 10 to Samoa and some paramedics who are in Samoa. Again, we saw a very graphic illustration on the news when one of the paramedics said that none of the training could prepare her for what she found on those idyllic beaches of Samoa and the tragedy that has affected many of those families.

I echo the words of the Premier in encouraging Queenslanders to donate to the relief fund. I commend the Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs for the relief centres that the Premier mentioned to help those in our Samoan, Indonesian, Filipino, Vietnamese and Tongan communities. We all know when we are in those countries how difficult communications can be. Trying to find out what is happening over there would be very difficult, especially for Australian families who have relatives over there.

I think it is very important we acknowledge we are a country that has so much. There are those who would criticise relief funds being applied. I think it is very important in these times that we acknowledge we have so much and we should generously help those who have so little and need our support at times like this.