




Speech by

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MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

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CHRISTCHURCH EARTHQUAKE, MOTION TO TAKE NOTE

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.44 am): On behalf of the opposition I rise to support the Premier in speaking about the Christchurch earthquake. As the Premier has already mentioned, as of yesterday more than 166 people have been confirmed dead after the earthquake and there are many more still missing. It is expected the final death toll will be up to 200.

A magnitude 6.3 earthquake hit the region on 22 February, only five months after the city was hit by a 7.1 magnitude earthquake. This one was far more shallow in terms of its depth and caused far more damage. It happened at a time when the city was far busier than it was on the previous occasion.

I note that the Prime Minister of New Zealand, John Key, said that there could be up to 10,000 homes that will have to be rebuilt. Some areas of Christchurch will have to be abandoned. The New Zealand Treasury estimates that the cost to the New Zealand economy could be NZ\$15 billion. It has cut economic growth by 1.5 per cent. The centre of the city had to be evacuated. There were massive power cuts. At one stage 80 per cent of the city had no power. Buildings have been left in ruins and roads buckled. We have all seen the very graphic demonstration of liquefaction—water and sand spewing out of cracks, cars trapped in the liquefaction as it solidified. The city ran out of ambulances. It was a very dramatic situation.

New Zealanders have shown the same strength and resoluteness of character that the Premier spoke about we in Queensland and Australia priding ourselves on. I know that we often joke—as the Premier has mentioned already—about the fact that there are many New Zealanders who live on the Gold Coast and the number of New Zealanders who come to Australia. But there is no doubt that in times of difficulty, Australians and New Zealanders know about our shared traditions. That is the case with the people of South Africa as well. When it comes to sporting events, it is us against the mother country, the UK. I know that when I worked in the UK for three years it was us and the Kiwis and the South Africans against the Poms. When it comes to real difficulties—as we have seen over the last couple of weeks in New Zealand—it has been great to see, as the Premier just mentioned, our emergency service workers and police going over and helping.

I think it is important to mention too that New Zealand is a very small country in terms of population. It has the same or very similar population to Queensland. Prime Minister John Key has done a very good job keeping the country together and making sure that they are still focusing on the future and not just dwelling on the past. The Mayor of Christchurch, Bob Parker, has been working very hard on behalf of his community.

I know that we do not want to make everything a sporting analogy, but at least the Canterbury Crusaders came out on Friday and, most importantly, beat New South Wales in the rugby. That showed that New Zealand will still be a force to be reckoned with in the months to come, including in the World Cup. They are determined to regroup and restructure. There is no talk about it cancelling these events. It is a proud nation.

Many of the people are friends and contacts of many of us. Many of us have New Zealand relations. I note that the Premier has spoken about journalists who have many connections. The former chief reporter at the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, Mike Bruce, who I think is now at the *Sunday Mail*, wrote a very poignant piece in the *Sunday Mail* a couple of weeks ago. He has elderly parents. He went back to Christchurch—a place that he remembers fondly because he grew up there. He was devastated to see the effect on both his family and friends he had grown up with and the effect on the city where he had grown up.

I note with concern yesterday's report that of a population of 390,000 in Christchurch up to 65,000 people have left the area, considering that it is too difficult to rebuild; it is too difficult to return. I am sure that as time goes on and people see that the city and the county is being rebuilt they will come back. There is no doubt that New Zealand, Christchurch and Canterbury are facing some real challenges.

I join with the Premier in assuring the people of New Zealand that we are there with them. We will provide whatever assistance we can. In this case we are unable to provide financial assistance, but we have certainly been there with the recovery efforts. We will be there in spirit. We will continue to be there. We know that New Zealand can come through this as we are determined to after the summer we have had with floods and cyclones. As the Leader of the Opposition, on behalf of the opposition, I want to pass on our support to the people Canterbury, the people of Christchurch and the people of New Zealand.