



Speech by


**Hon. David Crisafulli**

**MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA**

Hansard Thursday, 31 May 2012

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## VINCENT, STORM DAMAGE

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government) (9.35 pm): In the early hours of Tuesday, 20 March this year, the people of Vincent and surrounds suffered a severe storm that cut a swathe through the city. Winds up to 140 kilometres per hour destroyed 10 houses and damaged 107. Roads were closed by felled trees and power lines, businesses were left with no roofs or electricity, and schools, the local child-care centre and the library were forced to shut as crews swung into action to start urgent repairs.

The usual heroes—the police, firefighters and other emergency services staff, as well as SES volunteers, Townsville City Council work crews, the Australian Army and many other community minded volunteers and groups such as the Townsville Lions Club and the Salvation Army—started their work quickly. They are no strangers to swinging into action, as they have done just that many times in the past to look after those left vulnerable by the might of Mother Nature. The Voluntary Community Recovery Co-ordination Group was instrumental in coordinating the recovery efforts, along with the Townsville City Council Emergency Management Team.

I also mention the big hearted individuals from throughout the north who came to the aid of those less fortunate. Yet again, the men and women of North Queensland rescued and comforted each other. In the clean-up, 722 tonnes of materials were collected, including 11 tonnes of demolition waste and 681 tonnes of green waste. What happened to Vincent on 20 March and in the recovery efforts afterwards is a story of northern bravery, hard work and humour. We have had a lot of opportunity to practice those qualities and I think we have just about perfected them.

While I could tell hundreds of stories of heartbreak and near misses, I want to place on record a few of the ones I witnessed firsthand, as Councillors Ray Gartrell and Tony Parsons and I went through the area helping storm victims. I mention people such as my close friends the Parkes, whose mechanical business was torn to shreds; and the Centrals football club, which, under the leadership of Quentin Kersh, immediately began quarantining an unsafe building.

However, it was people's homes that truly revealed the extent of the damage and the true grit of the North Queensland spirit. Despite his own house suffering irreparable damage, Doug Sale could only think of his beloved wife, Anne, who was in hospital and whether or not he could cook the barbecue at the Vincent State School at the weekend's election. Peggy Brazel's magnificent lawn was covered in branches and her neighbours came to help. David and Rachele Preston are young homeowners who, despite coping a battering, were worried for the welfare of their elderly neighbour, Les Jackson. As an example of just how severe this storm was, a fibreglass pool from a business over 500 metres away ended up on their front lawn. Warren Losberg and Robert Jang watched as years of blood, sweat and tears spent planting trees on the council parkland in front of their house was blown away. They will bounce back, as will Tim and Kym Jolly, whose pride and joy, their back deck, was swamped. This tragedy affected the North Queensland community, but our spirit is strong and the community is rebuilding.