




Speech by

Jason Costigan

MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

Hansard Wednesday, 28 November 2012

SES WEEK

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (1.16 am): I rise in the House to acknowledge the wonderful and committed work of those fine men and women around Mackay and the Whitsundays who are proud members of the State Emergency Service. As we all know, it was recently SES Week around the country and, due to a prior engagement in my electorate, I could not be here in the House to show off my orange ribbon. I have pinned it on my jacket this morning, the pin of course marking Wear Orange to Work Day from a couple of weeks ago. Queensland and Queenslanders have been to hell and back in terms of natural disasters in recent years, of course with some tragic consequences. Luckily, my electorate has not copped the brunt of supercyclones or monster floods like other parts of the state, but many in the Whitsundays would well remember Cyclone Ului, a category 3 storm that hit the Whitsundays in March 2010. Back then I was living in the canefields of Strathdickie and our home was right in the path of Ului. I was actually out of the country at the time working in New Zealand and my eldest daughter and mother had to be evacuated in the middle of the night. When the sun rose the next day the clean-up started, and it was the SES that did much of the spadework in clearing the debris from roads and private property and other places and ensuring lunatic motorists did not drive across fallen powerlines or flooded creeks. The list goes on and on—as did life without power, something we endured for about a week or so.

Around Proserpine, Airlie Beach and Cannonvale the SES carried the can, and I want to take this opportunity to thank them and recognise members who have been donning the orange for a long time. I particularly wish to praise Harry Benjamin, a great worker for the Proserpine community via the local Rotary Club. He has been a member of the SES for more than 30 years. Others who deserve special recognition are Sarah Lethbridge and Andrew Sander from the Airlie Beach group, with 23 and 21 years of service to the SES respectively, and local controller from Proserpine Mark Connors, who this year chalked up 20 years with the SES. Cyclone Ului also wreaked havoc on the coastal community of Midge Point, as well as neighbouring Bloomsbury, and the SES in that part of the world has a real legend among them. His name is Bill Lade from a very well-respected family from my electorate and I warmly congratulate Bill on his 27 years with the SES. In Mackay those volunteers who deserve recognition include Roy Faulkner, who clocked up 30 years just recently, as did Neville Ross. John Landsdowne now has 26 years with the SES, and in a couple of days Chris Maes will bring up 24 years.

We should never take these fine men and women for granted, and I salute each and every one of them plus all of those who are members of the SES with the various groups around Mackay and the Whitsundays. Not only do they help our local community but others also in need, like people in the Far North after they copped cyclones Yasi and Larry, Rockhampton after its floods and The Gap in Brisbane after those storms. Now it is cyclone season, I wish all members in the Mackay-Whitsunday region the best for the coming months as we prepare for the north's wet season and what Mother Nature sometimes throws at us.