




Speech By  
**Hon. David Crisafulli**

**MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA**

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## **ADJOURNMENT SPEECH**

### **Townsville, Natural Disaster**

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (10.17 pm): One year ago, life in a quiet part of Townsville was turned upside down by an unpredictable freak of nature. Around 5 am on 20 March 2012, a storm swept across Cleveland Bay and touched down in Vincent and surrounding suburbs, cutting a path of destruction through the area that few could have imagined possible. The powerful winds removed roofs and walls, destroyed power lines and uprooted trees. Those residents who experienced the storm said it lasted only a few minutes but, as they emerged from their homes, many found the aftermath was far worse than their experiences a year earlier following Cyclone Yasi.

One hundred and seven homes were seriously damaged and 10 were destroyed in Vincent and Gulliver, with further damage to the surrounding suburbs. Hundreds of homes lost power and residents had to conserve water due to damage to the sewerage system. Paramedics treated 13 people for injuries and three were admitted to hospital. The biggest miracle was that no one was killed.

This week I have encouraged the residents I represent to tell their stories. People like Dorothy Stock, who lives with her family in Beattie Crescent, said the tornado was one of the most harrowing experiences of her life. In Lillipilli Street, Keith Jones's home was relatively unscathed with only a few smashed windows, but he recalls the sound as his rear neighbour's roof peeled off. I will never forget hearing Doug Sale tell me his priority was to cook the barbeque at the Vincent State School at the weekend election despite the fact he had lost so much and at the same time his wife, Anne, had been hospitalised.

I have watched with pride as homes, like those of David and Rachele Preston and Tim and Kym Jolly, have bounced back to their former glory. The clean-up was swift and, in all, 720 tonnes of waste was removed. But now, one year on, it is appropriate that we reflect on what good came from the very bad event.

Vincent is a working-class suburb. It has had its share of problems over the years but it is home to some of the most decent people in my city. On the morning of 20 March it was rare to see someone removing a fallen tree on their own. It was rare to see someone moving their possessions to a dry spot without someone mopping the timber floor behind them. And it was rare to see someone crying without a comforting arm around them. There were neighbours helping neighbours and strangers helping strangers. If someone had escaped the wrath of Mother Nature, chances are that someone nearby had not and people rolled up their sleeves and leant a hand.

Sometimes it takes an event like this to bring a community together. While I hope not to have to wake up again and see the destruction we witnessed one year ago, I know that if we do we have the community resolve to pick up the pieces yet again.