



Speech By  
**David Kempton**


**MEMBER FOR COOK**

---

Record of Proceedings, 6 May 2014

## **ADJOURNMENT**

### **Cyclone Ita**

 **Mr KEMPTON** (Cook—LNP) (12.43 am): During the week of 10 April 2014, Tropical Cyclone Ita threatened the communities of Cape York from Lockhart River to Cooktown. By Wednesday the cyclone had increased in severity to a category 4 and was on a steady trajectory towards Cape Flattery. Ita was expected to make landfall in the Hope Vale-Cooktown area as a severe category 5 storm by Friday. The Premier cut short his overseas trade visit and flew directly to Cairns and then on to Cooktown to assure the communities of Hope Vale and Cooktown that he was on the spot to make sure everything that needed to be done before, during and after the event would be done. Despite his efforts, rough weather prevented the Premier from getting to Hope Vale that night.

During the entire time, the Premier gathered and conveyed to the public up-to-the-minute information that was factual and balanced a lot of the hype and drama pouring out of some media outlets. That was very important as many people were traumatised by the threat of a category 5 storm and found reassurance in the Premier's words. From first light on Friday and well into the night, the Premier was in constant contact with the communities of Cooktown and Hope Vale and the disaster management centre to ensure preparations were undertaken in an orderly manner as Ita, now a category 5 system, bore down on them.

Cyclone Ita crossed the coast at Cape Flattery on the Friday night and swept down upon Hope Vale and Cooktown in the early hours of Saturday. As the cyclone made landfall, much of its power dissipated and it dwindled substantially. Due to a loss of power and communication, there was a period on Friday night and Saturday when we did not know exactly what the situation was in Hope Vale and Cooktown. It is often the case in emergency situations that in the absence of information the rumour mill causes a lot of grief as misinformation circulates. The Premier ensured all information given was both accurate and relevant.

It was with considerable relief that the cyclone passed without any injury, loss of life or broad-scale property damage. There was, however, substantial damage to crops and infrastructure such as roads, power and communications. On Sunday the Premier visited Cooktown and Hope Vale and reassured the residents that the clean-up and recovery would be swift and efficient. Minister Crisafulli has been in the region constantly since the event and has done a marvellous job in helping the towns get back to business. The Premier appointed Inspector Kev Guteridge to head up the disaster recovery on the ground, which was a sound choice.

Having been with the Premier right through this ordeal and involved in the recovery in the days and weeks after, I can say that the Premier's response was exactly what the communities needed. He did not wring his hands in despair in the face of this huge storm, but rolled up his sleeves and got involved. That is exactly what people expect from their leader.