



Speech By  
**Brittany Lauga**


**MEMBER FOR KEPPEL**

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Record of Proceedings, 6 May 2015

**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Tropical Cyclone Marcia**

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (2.47 pm): On Friday, 20 February 2015, category 5 Tropical Cyclone Marcia crossed the Central Queensland coast near Shoalwater Bay. The cyclone intensified rapidly into a category 5 cyclone within 48 hours of it forming. I am pleased to report that the community is recovering well. However, we do still need the support of our federal government in activating category D assistance to provide the much needed financial assistance for our region. I urge Prime Minister Tony Abbott to sign off on category D funding.

Over 60,000 homes were left without power and almost 3,000 people requested assistance from the SES. Significant structural damage occurred, with a number of houses having roofs blown off. The loss of power for several days and the subsequent loss of food and stock in the days after the cyclone had an impact on residents, businesses and community infrastructure across the region.

I took a helicopter flight with Mayor Bill Ludwig and Inspector Kev Gutheridge after the cyclone in order to reach out to some of our region's most remote communities. We were greeted by Pat McQuaide and several other residents at Stockyard Point who took us on a tour of the small remote community to show us the damage from the cyclone. Pat explained that the community had only managed to chainsaw 1.8 kilometres of the 18-kilometre road in one day. Stunned, I asked if it would be a problem that residents may not be able to get out for what may be in excess of a week. Pat smiled and quickly brushed off my comments. 'She'll be right, mate,' he said. We talk about resilience after natural disasters and this is a prime example of it.

I thank the Premier and ministers who visited the region multiple times after the cyclone and I know Central Queenslanders appreciated the visit of His Excellency the Hon. Paul de Jersey the Governor who also visited the region several times.

The social and economic impacts from the cyclone are serious. The impacts on residents, businesses and community organisations of all shapes and sizes are real, especially the community of Byfield including its residents and businesses: the Keppel Bay Sailing Club, which is one of the Capricorn Coast's largest employers; the Nerimbera Football Club, one of the country's oldest sporting clubs, at 105 years of age, which had its clubhouse destroyed; Cooberrie Park Wildlife Sanctuary, which suffered significant damage; primary producers, such as Errol Vass whose macadamia farm at Bondoola was devastated, pineapple growers, other graziers and various nurseries; and the Teys and JBS meat-processing plants in North Rockhampton which both suffered damage that delayed reopening.

From here it is onwards and upwards for Central Queensland. We will never forget the damage and pain caused by Tropical Cyclone Marcia, but I know that we will grow as a stronger community—a brighter, more united community than ever before.