




Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Record of Proceedings, 23 February 2016

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Fiji, Cyclone Winston

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.41 am): On behalf of the government and all Queenslanders, I extend my condolences to the people of Fiji in the wake of Cyclone Winston, which has very sadly claimed more than 20 lives. Queensland knows firsthand how devastating natural disasters can be. We have seen on television the damage and destruction which has been caused by Cyclone Winston. Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims of what is believed to have been the most powerful cyclone ever to hit Fiji. There are reports of winds with devastating speeds of up to 330 kilometres an hour. Aerial shots of Fiji have provided a bird's-eye view of the enormous damage caused by the cyclone, and images on the news have shown trees and powerlines down across roads, houses destroyed and public infrastructure decimated. We know that, as well as the people of Fiji, there are many Australians who may have been affected, and we are also thinking of those people and their families.

Australia's role and response in providing assistance to foreign countries following an international disaster is the responsibility of the federal government. Queensland stands ready to assist with recovery efforts if we are called upon, and we have offered services as part of the federal government's response. I understand that troops have left from Townsville this morning and will soon be on the ground to assist with what they have called an 'uncertain task'. A number of other Australian non-government organisations are working with communities affected by the cyclone. I encourage all Queenslanders to consider donating to organisations such as Red Cross in support of the relief efforts.