



Speech By  
**Hon. Cameron Dick**


**MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE**

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Record of Proceedings, 9 May 2017

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

### **Tropical Cyclone Debbie, Hospital and Health Services and Ambulance Service**

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.10 am): On Tuesday, 28 March, Tropical Cyclone Debbie crossed the Queensland coast near Airlie Beach as a category 4 system. In times of great adversity, front-line Queensland Health staff once again delivered outstanding care to our fellow Queenslanders in the most challenging conditions from the Whitsundays to the New South Wales border. The Department of Health deployed 183 staff and Community Recovery Ready Reserve volunteers to help residents in areas affected by the cyclone, particularly at Bowen and Proserpine. About 2,000 staff of the Mackay Hospital and Health Service, particularly at the Mackay Base, Bowen and Proserpine hospitals, worked tirelessly to support their local communities. The Townsville Hospital and Health Service, along with hospital and health services in the south-east of the state, dispatched over 70 clinicians and health workers to support the hardworking Mackay Hospital and Health Service staff.

One hundred and eleven Queensland Ambulance Service staff were deployed to the cyclone and flood affected communities. QAS specialist state operations vehicles from Brisbane were deployed to provide assistance to affected communities and a QAS tactical medical centre was set up at the Rockhampton evacuation centre in preparation for flooding. The response was also strong in the city of Logan, part of which I am privileged to represent in this House. Staff at Logan Hospital faced significant challenges with access to the hospital due to flooding.

The Queensland Health, QAS and Mackay HHS social media accounts were an important source of information for those affected by Tropical Cyclone Debbie. The department's Twitter account posted and retweeted more than 200 health messages and alerts, while the Facebook account posted over 40 health messages as well as sharing content from HHSs across Queensland.

There were some great stories to come out of these challenging circumstances. A healthy baby girl was born at the Whitsunday Ambulance Station at Cannonvale. Baby Billiana was delivered by her mum with the support of her dad and assistance from graduate paramedic Pamela Price, advanced care paramedic Peter Gleeson, critical care paramedic Anthony Fletcher, local GP Dr Melissa McCann, and midwife Demelza Griff. Another healthy baby girl was born at the Nebo Ambulance Station. Her mother was assisted by advanced care paramedic Joy Cooper with help from QAS volunteer driver Kara Miller and a local police officer.

An amazing story of survival was the man who suffered very serious injuries after a wall collapsed at his Proserpine home. After communication with the local ambulance coordination centre, Proserpine officer in charge Gavin Cousens, together with police, helped save this man's life by safely reaching him, treating and transporting him to Proserpine Hospital where he was stabilised during the eye of the cyclone. I had the privilege of meeting Gavin Cousens when I travelled to the region to thank staff. Paramedics regard Gav as a legend and I recognise his courage and dedication to duty in the House today.

When faced with very challenging circumstances, the dedication and commitment of Health staff across the state shone through. It shows that they genuinely care for the health and wellbeing of their fellow Queenslanders and for that we are truly indebted.