




Speech By
Stephen Andrew

MEMBER FOR MIRANI

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ADJOURNMENT

Ambae Island, Monaro Volcano

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (12.31 am): I would like to bring to the attention of the House the natural disaster that has been occurring in the Pacific islands; namely, on the island I come from—Ambae Island. The people over there have been displaced after a natural disaster that has resulted from a volcano called Monaro. It has displaced 11,000 people. I know that the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, the member for Sandgate, who is here tonight, is very understanding of the contribution our people have made to Queensland.

There are children in tents. Families have been split up. Livestock have been left on the island because they could not be moved with boats. All of their food and farms have been decimated. It has absolutely destroyed the whole island. All of the islanders have had to be moved. It would be lovely to try to help some of these impoverished people after what they did for us when they were blackbirded here in terms of the contribution they made to Queensland.

It is amazing to think that the House could do something for these people going forward. Having seen photos of what has transpired over there I can say that it will take a long time to bring that all back into play. There is 150 to 200 millimetres of ash everywhere. Every single plant and every single water source on the island has been poisoned. As the rain falls and goes through the ash, it destroys more and turns it into a slush of devastation.

I know they have asked for someone from the Queensland parliament to go over there to have a look to see what they can do, if there is anything that can be done, to help. We are a Westminster parliament and they are a Commonwealth country, so it would be good to help them as much as we can. They have never asked for anything. They have always asked for a hand up, never a handout.

We have the Seasonal Worker Program here, so it would be nice to see whether we could incorporate that and make sure that Queensland can look after some of these people when there is work in Bowen and in the cane fields. Everyone is struggling to find jobs—I realise that—but there may be some opportunities for these people to have a go as well. It is good to make sure that we look after our own. They are not just my own; these people are all throughout Queensland as well and they have made a big contribution to the Queensland cane fields. It is not a big ask to give a little bit back.