




Speech By
Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

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MOTION

Natural Disasters

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (3.06 pm): Sometimes you wonder how much more Queenslanders can take, particularly those who live in North Queensland and regional Queensland. Year after year—too often lately—North Queensland has been hit by cyclones and floods and this year Central Queensland has been hit with bushfires as well, but they just keep on keeping on. From the comfortable suburbs of Brisbane, where I am from and my electorate is, it is sometimes hard to appreciate what sort of struggles our northern cousins go through. That is why I really appreciated the opportunity to go to North Queensland with the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Burdekin to witness this firsthand and to get out there and help.

We were at the suburb of Idalia—the member for Burdekin is nodding his head—and you really had to see it to believe it. Never, ever did they think that suburb would flood. To give you some perspective, I think I heard at one stage that the amount of rain that fell in that seven or 10 days was the equivalent of three years rain that Melbourne gets, and we all know how much rain Melbourne gets. That is just unbelievable. The day we arrived the rain was starting to dissipate. When I asked the girl at reception, ‘How was it last night?’ she said, ‘It was a good night last night; we only got five inches.’

It is just unbelievable to see people going through all their goods and lifelong memories. The husband of one lady, Carol De Ambrosis, was in hospital getting a hip replacement and there was no-one there to help her, but there is a fantastic community spirit there. Matt and Marlene from across the road just basically took over. Matt, forgetting about his own house that needed work, went across the road to coordinate the volunteers who came from other houses that were not as badly affected.

Then of course there is the destruction that has happened in the north-west. One moment they were so glad they were about to get rain and the next moment they were devastated by the impact of the rain, with literally hundreds of thousands of beasts dying—again, beyond belief.

We thank all those involved in the volunteer effort, both paid professionals and volunteers. We are a very fortunate state. We have a fighting spirit. We want the people of North Queensland and regional Queensland to know that we will not forget them and that together we will get through this.

(Time expired)