



Speech By
Cynthia Lui

MEMBER FOR COOK

Record of Proceedings, 2 September 2021

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Climate Change, Torres Strait Islands

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (2.15 pm): Climate change is a very important issue that affects all of us. For one region in my electorate of Cook, the impact of climate change has had a significant impact on people's lived experience. Today, I rise to speak specifically on the impact of climate change on the Torres Strait Islands and raise awareness for a global issue that is affecting the lives of people in our backyard.

While all the islands are affected in different ways, smaller low-lying islands such as Poruma, Warraber, Yam, Masig, Boigu and Saibai are considered the most vulnerable. Every year people in these communities endure the ongoing stress that comes with tidal inundation due to the rising sea level. Locals on these islands sit back every day and are reminded of where the shoreline used to be, but due to coastal erosion these beautiful islands continue to lose valuable shoreline.

Families have the traumatic experience of seeing parts of cemeteries being washed away. In speaking with local Masig elder Uncle Ned Mosby on the shores of Masig, he pointed to where the shoreline used to be, and the stories of traditions associated with certain areas that are no longer there and connection to place that no longer exists are becoming stories that are told to the younger generation.

When I visited Warraber Island, I heard from locals about graves of loved ones being washed away and the traumatic experience that comes with recovering bones. On Yam Island families were left homeless after losing their homes and belongings to tidal inundation. I visited Yam Island with Minister Crawford and was told by a family member how she was just about to sit down to watch TV and noticed water rushing through her front door. On Saibai Island every year parts of the community and homes are inundated.

I know from my personal experience living on the island that every year the community buckled down for, one, the king tides and, two, extreme weather events. King tides and strong winds are not a good match. The ongoing direct and indirect impact of climate change will continue to have a detrimental effect on the health and wellbeing on these communities.

I was reading a news article by ABC News from early August where reference was made to the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. It stated—

... the Earth will warm by more than 1.5 degrees Celsius within the decade, causing rising sea levels and more frequent and devastating natural disasters, unless drastic action is taken to reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

The whole issue of climate change will continue to affect us no matter where we live. Scott Morrison is once again failing us by refusing to commit to a target of net zero emissions by 2050, after an international 'code red' warning on climate change was issued by global leaders. I say to Scott Morrison and his federal LNP government: sitting back and saying and doing nothing is not good enough. Do your job and start a national conversation to address the impacts of climate change for the good of this country.