




Speech By
Bree James

MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

Record of Proceedings, 11 December 2024

ADJOURNMENT

Cyclone Jasper

 **Ms JAMES** (Barron River—LNP) (1.07 am): Next week marks the one-year anniversary of Far North Queensland standing up against the might of Mother Nature and the devastation of Cyclone Jasper. After Jasper hit the rain did not stop for days, and by the weekend the horror had started to build. Calls for help on social media broke my heart. One terrified, heavily pregnant mother was floating on a mattress with her toddler, begging for someone to rescue her. What happened during the floodwaters rising and afterwards defined the spirit of our community. Isolated from the rest of the world and with official help channels stretched, many risked their lives to save their neighbours. The tales of heroism, kindness and generosity from this time have been humbling and inspirational.

Today I would like to acknowledge the Far North Queensland community for our strength, resilience and love for one another. I would particularly like to acknowledge our SES and first responders, who were instrumental in countless rescues. The SES crews from Gordonvale, Holloways Beach, Trinity Beach, Edmonton, Machans Beach, Cairns, Innisfail, Kuranda and Buchans Point did an incredible job, responding to over 1,000 calls for help in 48 hours.

I would like to make special mention of some incredible humans who risked their lives at the peak of the floods: Steve Schwartz, Lindsay Marriott, Reece Booij, Lucy Graham, Nicholas Piggan, Andrew Patterson, Natalie Sonenko, Maxwell Folley, Chris Jerrems, Bradley Lillyman, Tyler Vikionkorpi, Kate Morelli, Darren Low and Ricky and Jarrod Maller. Those brave SES rescuers and civilians took people from their homes and dropped them on the roof of a house in Holloways Beach. At one point, that roof had nearly 40 people on it as they waited for another SES boat to take them up the Barron River, past flying logs and against incredible currents, to the Barron River boat ramp and safety. Around 157 people, 50 dogs and cats, plus a blue-tongue lizard crossed that roof on the Sunday night. There were a further 200 rescues on Monday.

I would like to acknowledge the mud army volunteers, Holloways Hub crew, the Rotary clubs for their countless sausage sizzles that fed everyone, the GOPIO community, the Yellow Jackets of Latter Day Saints, the Cairns community Christmas present drive, the Cairns community flood appeal team, the beaches community Christmas luncheon crew and the Machans Beach Hub, which are still supporting and feeding flood victims to this day. I would also like to acknowledge the incredible small business community that donated and helped out so much, and the Cairns Regional Council teams and TMR workers who worked around the clock and throughout Christmas. At one point, we nearly ran out of drinking water. I also thank the geotechnical director, Jun Sugawara, who gave critical advice to assist the TMR team to get many of our roads operational.

There is still a long journey ahead for many people and businesses. Unfortunately, the devastation and suffering will continue for some time to come.