



Speech By  
**Cynthia Lui**


**MEMBER FOR COOK**

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## **EMERGENCY SERVICES REFORM AMENDMENT BILL; STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE BILL; MARINE RESCUE QUEENSLAND BILL; DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**


### **Second Reading (Cognate Debate)**

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (11.52 am): I rise to make my contribution to the cognate bills, and I will focus my contribution on the State Emergency Service Bill. I will take this opportunity to acknowledge the Minister for Police and Community Safety, the Hon. Mark Ryan, and the Minister for Fire and Disaster Recovery and Minister for Corrective Services, the Hon. Nikki Boyd.

In December last year, FNQ was severely impacted by the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Jasper. This was a unique situation because, whilst tropical cyclones are not new to Far North Queensland, the severe flooding was something extraordinary. Tropical Cyclone Jasper is now recorded as the wettest tropical cyclone in Australian history. It led to severe flooding, causing large-scale isolation throughout the greater Far North Queensland region. Jasper certainly brought out stories of incredible strength and resilience, and as I saw complete strangers stepping in to help and support each other.

Multiple communities in my electorate were severely impacted. Those communities included Rossville, Ayton, Wujal Wujal, Degarra, Cape Tribulation, Daintree, Newell Beach, Wonga Beach, Mossman and Port Douglas. Those 10 communities were completely cut off from essential services, which heightened the risk for residents in those parts. Jasper highlighted the complex nature of the Cook electorate and the challenges attached to providing a strong response across multiple communities over a vast region. I acknowledge that FNQ was not the only region impacted by that natural disaster event. Other regions across Queensland were impacted and, for that reason, we must work smarter.

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 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (3.30 pm), continuing: Streamlining our emergency services will ensure efficiency and a strong coordinated approach should we ever have to face a severe weather event again.

The committee received 20 submissions to the three bills, of which three submissions spoke exclusively to this bill and six submissions referred to the bill as well as one or both of the other bills in the emergency reform amendment package. Stakeholders were generally supportive of the proposed reforms in the bill. The three bills proposed to enable a range of disaster and emergency services reforms to enhance Queensland's capacity to respond to natural disasters and keep people safe in the state's oceans and waterways.

The Emergency Services Reform Amendment Bill 2023 recognises the Queensland State Emergency Service and Marine Rescue Queensland and aligns both entities under the control of the Queensland Police Service. The objectives of the bill contribute to the reform of Queensland's

emergency services and disaster management arrangements by: establishing Marine Rescue Queensland as a statewide marine rescue service; establishing the State Emergency Service through the State Emergency Service Bill; aligning Marine Rescue Queensland and State Emergency Service under the control of the Queensland Police Service through the bill, which will make the necessary administrative and consequential amendments for this to occur; and formally establishing the State Disaster Management Group within the Disaster Management Act.

I want to acknowledge the hard work and effort of all the emergency services in my electorate—VMR, SES and rural fire. Responding to emergencies often puts them in the most challenging situations. Without fail, they go far and beyond for the community and they deserve our thanks.

There are a couple of things I want to highlight. First, I want to mention the work of the local disaster management groups—in particular, the LDMGs in the Cook shire, the Wujal Wujal Aboriginal shire, the Mareeba shire and the Douglas shire—for their efforts in the Far North Queensland floods. They all did a phenomenal job with coordinating a disaster response within their council jurisdiction and across boundaries. As seen in the FNQ floods, the severity of the disaster certainly puts a lot of financial pressures on my councils. I note that the Local Government Association of Queensland was supportive of the bill as part of the emergency services reform amendment package and the call to allocate significant resourcing to the collection of the emergency service levy from prescribed properties.

Second, I want to mention the acts of kindness by good Samaritans. During the floods in FNQ, we saw local good Samaritans volunteering their time to help with rescue missions. Magoo is a local helicopter pilot who was the first on the scene during the floods, landing on rooftops to rescue people and taking them to safety. I met Magoo during my trip to Cooktown in late December where I thanked him for his hero effort. In his humble words he said it had to be done. I heard a story of a young fellow who I have never met. I heard his story of bravery rescuing people in his tinnie and taking them to safety.

I want to acknowledge the many other good Samaritans who risk their lives to rescue people in desperate situations and in need of help. Even though the bill continues civil liability protections to the SES and its members through the Civil Liability Regulation 2014, it does not include the actions of good Samaritans like Magoo and the many other good Samaritans who will continue to go out of their way to help humanity.

I am speaking to this bill because I want to see a more streamlined, coordinated approach to disaster response. The pooling of resources will certainly increase our capacity to respond effectively in the event of a natural disaster and especially in a vast and complex electorate like mine. This new way of doing things will certainly go a long way for us in Far North Queensland.

I am fully supportive of this bill. I want to commend the Miles government for bringing this legislative reform to the House. I know it is going to be a true game changer for the future, and streamlining all the emergency services under the one umbrella will strengthen our capabilities and increase our capacity to perform better under extreme circumstances.

Before I finish, I want to acknowledge and thank my good friends Kim Richards, the member for Redlands, and Aaron Harper, the member for Thuringowa, for their support for me and my community in Cook. The member for Redlands flew into Cairns on Boxing Day, and we were then on the road to Cape York as she accompanied me to the different communities that I look after on Cape York. Both the Redlands electorate office and the Thuringowa electorate office assisted with making welfare calls into the Cook electorate, and I am so very thankful and grateful.

I acknowledge the committee, the committee secretariat and Hansard for the work that went into the examination of the bill. This is a good bill that promotes efficiency in disaster response. I commend all of the bills to the House.