




Speech By
Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

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ADJOURNMENT

Burdekin Electorate, Tropical Cyclone Kiriily

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (7.07 pm): Queensland is a state of extremes. In recent weeks, we have seen extreme weather right throughout the state. In North Queensland preparations to celebrate Australia Day went on hold as Tropical Cyclone Kiriily bore down on the coast, crossing the coast at Townsville on the night of 25 January. The cyclone may have resulted in the delay or cancellation of Australia Day events, but, despite this, we saw true Australian character come to the fore as communities began the recovery process in an area that was littered with fallen trees and left without power. Estimates are that 66,000 customers, both residential and business, were affected by power outages. While lights may not have been working, North Queenslanders were. Within hours of daybreak on 26 January, volunteers from the SES were attending to dwellings that had sustained minor damage and it was not long until the sound of chainsaws echoed throughout the otherwise quiet suburbs and towns.

For some the assistance of volunteers, friends and families was a great help and for others it was essential. I would especially like to acknowledge those in our community who, in the aftermath of Cyclone Kiriily, took it upon themselves to assist the elderly and others who were unable to undertake recovery activities on their own. That is the true spirit of Queensland and they deserve to be recognised. The other sound that permeated North Queensland following Cyclone Kiriily was the sound of generators. Whilst answers are needed as to why our electricity infrastructure suffered such a big hit from a category 2 cyclone, there can be no doubt that our energy workers went above and beyond. Some areas saw their power restored in 24 to 48 hours while for others it was a much longer wait. It is fair to say that for some it was a frustrating period, but the overwhelming consensus was one of thanks to the workers who had left their families to assist others.

In some areas, day time temperatures were in the high 30s and the humidity was above 90 per cent, but the men and women of Ergon and other energy companies worked tirelessly. The best illustration of the region's gratitude was the fact that residents were delivering cold drinks, food and even home-cooked meals to workers who, in some cases, were working around the clock. Queensland is a state of extremes, but Queenslanders are tougher. They look out for each other and believe in acknowledging a job well done. According to Ergon, 66,000 customers were reconnected in just six days. While a full recovery will take time, North Queenslanders will never forget those who came to their aid in the lead-up to and during the recovery from Tropical Cyclone Kiriily, which continues today in many suburbs right across that particular community.