




Speech By
Les Walker

MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Emergency Services, Volunteers

 **Mr WALKER** (Mundingburra—ALP) (2.27 pm): I rise to speak about our emergency services volunteers and Ergon. These are exceptional Queenslanders who leave their families during a time of crisis—flooding, fires and extreme storm events like Tropical Cyclone Kirrily—to help others in a time of need. These people are true community champions. State Emergency Service and Rural Fire Service volunteers in Queensland are some of the best in the country. I want to take the time to thank them on behalf of the people of Townsville and the surrounding communities. They did an excellent job of helping others during Cyclone Kirrily and their service is deeply appreciated.

On the eve of 26 January this year, Townsville had an encounter with Cyclone Kirrily. We were incredibly lucky and dodged a bullet; however, there was some minor damage to property which left the city with a massive clean-up bill. There was a big clean-up, with fallen trees, debris and branches scattered right across the city. Private property was damaged as well. This clean-up is still going today, thanks to our committed Townsville City Council staff and contractors. The cyclone also left a large number of homes without power. Mine was one of those. Yes, it was stressful at the time due to the extreme heat and no breeze, but we still survived.

I want to place on public record my appreciation and that of the Townsville community for the exceptional work of the Ergon teams. Ergon were very quick to establish the early staging of equipment at Reid Park prior to the cyclone and they had professional teams ready to go and hit the ground running after the cyclone event. They really did hit the ground running. What is really impressive is that a large number of these Ergon teams had been in Far North Queensland after Cyclone Jasper, which hit just north of Port Douglas on 13 December 2023. That was just some six weeks earlier. That is exceptional. It really demonstrates the intense time frames and huge areas these teams had to cover to help fellow Queenslanders.

I want to state again my sincere gratitude for their quick response and tireless work. I must stress that we are very lucky that Ergon is publicly owned and had a professional workforce ready to hit the ground running to help their fellow Queenslanders. That is exceptional, and I thank them again.