




Speech By
Hon. Amanda Stoker

MEMBER FOR OODGEROO

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ADJOURNMENT

South-East Queensland, Weather Events

 **Hon. AJ STOKER** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (9.23 pm): I rise to pay tribute to the courage, patience and resilience of my community during the impact of Tropical Cyclone Alfred and the rain that followed in its wake, both on the mainland and on North Stradbroke Island. I want to thank the SES, the elders, the ambos, the midwives and health workers—twins were even born on Straddie during the cyclone—the fires, the police, the council and the ferry workers who have all gone above and beyond over the last week.

In particular, I would like to share my admiration for the way in which the residents of North Stradbroke Island have, despite bearing the brunt of the force of the cyclone, risen to the challenge. As I have been trying to help get food and fuel supply to the island, to get Energex deployed and telecommunications on their way to being restored, I have seen so many wonderful attributes in this community. Many people do not realise that in a small island community, when there is not the same number of public facilities as you get on the mainland, local businesses really do take on a special role. The Amity Point general store, with the help of a Starlink device loaned from a resident, became the hub of Amity Point as locals without power or telecommunications gathered to charge from their generator and have the chance to send a message to the people they love.

I cannot express how stressful it has been for people to be cut off. The Amity Tav, the local hotel, fed people without charge and, as the waters rose, the community took care of each other there. As small businesses like Bo Beans and Rufus King struggled to trade with electronic payments not working and ATMs not working either, as local businesses dependent on generators drove 40 kilometres back and forth for loads of fuel to power the generators so they could keep going—having a staff member do literally nothing but drive back and forth to the island's one and only operating servo to keep it all together as desperate families were confronted with grocery stores with nothing in them—their desperation was real. At Point Lookout, where only half the town has generator power as we speak, the Beach Hotel stepped up to provide a place for people to safely gather, check on each other, charge their devices and eat. They could have closed their doors, and it probably would have been easier, but they did not hesitate to offer a safe place for people in this community.

I will finish this shout-out at Dunwich, where the servo and the FoodWorks were shut and the ferry terminal, even though it was within sight, was not operating. At St Stradbroke, Andy and Larissa turned their usual coffee, wine and cheese operation into a place where people could drop in, be cared for and unload.

These people are not social workers. They are not funded to provide counselling and support relief services to entire islands, but they did it anyway. Despite being stretched, none of them hesitated to answer the call of their neighbour in their hour of need. I just want them to know: I see you and I thank you for the lengths you have gone to, to help make your community stronger in adversity.