




Speech By
David Kempton

MEMBER FOR COOK

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Cook Electorate

 **Mr KEMPTON** (Cook—LNP) (2.53 pm): The electorate of Cook is the furthestmost electorate in the state from this House. It is literally at the end of the line. In formulating my description of the electorate I was tempted to make reference to the famous Cat Stevens song title *Miles from Nowhere* but I thought better of it. Whilst my electorate largely escaped the recent devastating floods unscathed, they did, however, highlight that we are, in fact, at the end of the supply line.

Queensland's response to these record-breaking floods was truly commendable, from the efforts of the Premier, the members of parliament, frontline and rescue workers to transport operators and neighbours. No-one was left unsupported during or in the aftermath of the devastation. Being at the end of the supply chain means the far north is the first region to run short of essential supplies and the last to be resupplied. Notwithstanding this almost annual challenge, it appears to me that the further people are from the capital cities and the more remote their location, the better they are able to survive the impact of any disruption to the supply chain.

It was an unusual disaster event that saw every road transport and rail link between the south and the far north disrupted by flooding for a number of days. The impact on residents in the path was devastating, as we have heard. Unlike the then government's fragmented and half-baked response to—and the broken promises after—Cyclone Jasper, the Crisafulli government turned up, stayed and saw the job through, reconnecting the north with the distribution network as soon as possible.

The people of Far North Queensland are entitled to an all-weather access road joining Cairns to Brisbane and, whilst that is in the making, a pre-disaster strategy to ensure that all residents in the far north are safe and well provisioned. This is not the sole responsibility of the state government, as local authorities, the federal government and disaster management groups have a vital role to play. Large supermarket chains need to reassess their storage, resupply and distribution processes, and residents need to be educated on the value of preparedness over panic buying. I acknowledge that my electorate fared far better than most in the far north, which is a commendable indication of their resilience.