



Speech By  
**Dale Last**


**MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN**

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Record of Proceedings, 26 February 2019

**MOTION**

**Natural Disasters**

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (3.25 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Premier's motion—a motion that has particular relevance to the Burdekin electorate because, like Townsville, we also lost a life. Tragically, Justin Scott was killed in a boating incident at Groper Creek. I want to extend my condolences to his wife, Sabrina, and their family and friends. I want to also acknowledge the work of our emergency service staff, volunteers and members of the public in my electorate for their bravery, their compassion and their dedication throughout this event.

In our electorate we did not escape nature's wrath. Giru, Majors Creek, Woodstock, Groper Creek, Rita Island and Gumlu saw the effects of these events firsthand. Many primary producers throughout the Burdekin electorate have been affected. I have seen firsthand how the productive farming land has been gouged out by the Haughton River and crops lost. Last week I stood on the bank of the river with local farmer Tony Poletto and he indicated to me that his pump and all his cylinders and all his irrigation equipment were somewhere on the bottom of the river—somewhere in the vicinity of \$100,000 lost—and it means that his sugar crop for the rest of this year will not be irrigated.

I also acknowledge the people of Giru. Far too often they are the victims of flooding and are effectively cut off from the outside world, but the people of Giru are a tough lot and during this recent event they were cut off for six days, with the only assistance available to that community via boat or helicopter. In that community we saw them come together. We saw a small team of emergency services personnel, volunteers and business owners band together to keep their community safe. We saw people in danger cared for, people with medical issues evacuated and people in need fed, and on many occasions that group that undertook these tasks did so without a thought for their own comfort.

I want to acknowledge the efforts of this small but dedicated group that gave so much for the people of Giru: Peter and Alex of the Queensland Ambulance Service; Ryan and Joel from the Police Service; Cherie from QFES and Peter and Frank of the Giru SES who drove through water that you would shudder to think of even entering in an effort to make sure that people were looked after and evacuated as required. To Greg, Ange and the team from the Giru cafe and post office: thank you for taking care of our dedicated emergency crews and locals alike. To Mick and Rita from the Giru store: thank you for your efforts as well. When you think that these people had water through their shops, through the ambulance station, through the fire station and yet they worked, in some cases, for 48 hours straight without a break, then you truly appreciate how they went above and beyond their duties to meet the needs of that community. I take my hat off to them and thank them for their efforts during that flooding event.