



Speech By  
**Mark Robinson**

**MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND**

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Record of Proceedings, 13 February 2014

**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENTS**

**North Stradbroke Island, Bushfires**

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (3.54 pm): I rise to provide an update to the parliament on North Stradbroke Island, as the local member representing the island residents, in the aftermath of the devastating Christmas fires, with an eye to the challenges that this natural disaster now poses to the island's recovery and transition to a non-sandmining economy. In late December fires broke out on North Stradbroke Island as a result of one or more lightning strikes. Fanned by strong winds, the fire broke out into many fires with much damage being done over the next few weeks of January.

In excess of 16,000 hectares of land was burnt by the fire or two-thirds of the island's footprint. The impact and scale of the fires is only now being fully felt by the local communities on the island. The local businesses and tourism sector are doing it tough since the fires forced the evacuation of many holiday-makers at peak time. Many of these businesses rely upon that peak season as the main source of revenue for their operation. The island's tourism industry and local businesses have taken a hit with a loss of trade during that season. The fires placed an enormous emotional and financial strain upon the communities of North Stradbroke Island.

It should be noted, however, that due to the planning and hard work of the various emergency service agencies, I am happy to report that no property was damaged nor lives lost during the fires. The well-coordinated approach of the various emergency services at the emergency management centre in Dunwich and at the fires was something to behold firsthand. My time at the centre gave me a firsthand appreciate of their work under pressure.

I want to thank all of the staff and volunteers who worked tirelessly during and in the aftermath of the fire. The several hundred individuals are too many to name, but they came from the police, fire, SES, ambulance, parks and wildlife, Energex, the Redland City Council and elsewhere. I want to particularly thank Minister Mark McArdle for his visit representing the Premier and cabinet and for ensuring the power was fully restored. It was also uplifting that the community came together to not only fight the fire but to support each other at the front line, with the evacuation or by helping in the evacuation centre.

Participating in the community information meetings at Dunwich, Amity Point and Point Lookout was also important to obtain the briefings and to get feedback from the residents. We escaped the fires relatively unscathed, but the fires have had a great impact on wildlife and vegetation. Our government will do all we can to assist in the rejuvenation of these areas. A workable economic transition plan is now needed. I look forward to working with residents to achieve that.

In closing, I want Queensland to know that Straddie is still open for business and there has never been a better time to jump on the water taxi or barge and experience the golden beaches of North Stradbroke Island.