



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

I have been profoundly concerned to hear of the devastating havoc the wet season has caused across the Northern Territory, and how it has disrupted every facet of society.

I am deeply conscious that, for many years now, the Northern Territory has endured the harsh reality of climate change and borne the brunt of its destructive extremes. Such events remind us of just how severe and wide-reaching the consequences of extreme weather can be, affecting not only your cherished homes, vital infrastructure and hard-fought livelihoods, but also your essential connections to one another.

I am only too aware of the massive destruction caused to families and communities, as well as to Nature, by bushfires, floods, cyclones and droughts. Extreme weather events of every kind are becoming both more frequent and more ferocious in their impact. Nowhere is this phenomenon more evident than in Australia. What were once described as once in ten, or fifty, or one hundred, year weather events are now occurring much more frequently.

Territorians know this only too well. Many will remember the tragic devastation of Cyclone Tracy over Christmas 1974. During my visit to the Northern Territory at the time, I well recall witnessing the disastrous impact on the City of Darwin and marvelling at the rescue, recovery and rebuilding of communities, homes and lives. Now, again, I find myself full of admiration for the selfless and unwavering commitment of all those who have risked their own safety to provide critical assistance in the most challenging of conditions, particularly to remote and isolated communities. The strength and courage displayed in recent weeks is deserving of the deepest respect and gratitude and I can only hope that the people of the Northern Territory will emerge from this period of appalling hardship with a renewed and reinvigorated sense of connection, and pride in their community.

The increasingly catastrophic effects of climate change are surely a siren-call to the world for more urgent action, not only to address the root causes of our changing climate, but also to restore and revive the inherent resilience of Nature, and to live in Harmony with her through Nature-based solutions.

As the end of the wet season approaches, I can only pray that Territorians will continue to find the strength to draw on their resolve, compassion and commitment to each other in these most trying of times. My deepest sympathy goes to all those whose lives, livelihoods and property have been so affected by these tragic events.

CHARLES R.