

~~C to a number of areas that were affected by Cyclone Yasi—that is, Burdekin, Cairns, the Cassowary Coast, Hinchinbrook, Palm Island, the Tablelands, Townsville and Yarrabah. There is also a package under category D that was announced by the Premier and the Deputy Prime Minister which will provide further assistance to small businesses and primary producers.~~

~~Category D special assistance has only been activated once before, and that was following Cyclone Larry. However, we have learnt a lot from Cyclone Larry in terms of what assistance will aid in the recovery. It is really about tailoring a scheme to meet the demands. Assistance under categories B and C of NDRRA should be, in the majority, sufficient to help primary producers recover, but under category D—~~

~~(Time expired)~~

016

### ~~Natural Disasters, Recovery Assistance~~

~~**Mr HOPPER:** My question is to the Minister for Primary Industries. I refer to the previous question, which the minister just answered, and to the federal activation of category D natural disaster assistance for communities and businesses hit by Cyclone Yasi, and I ask: will the minister advise the House what actions he has taken and what progress is being made to have Darling Downs farmers who have suffered total devastation from the floods similarly declared as category D for natural disaster relief payments and loan subsidies?~~

~~**Mr MULHERIN:** I thank the honourable member for the question. Under category D, the package announced today for the Yasi affected area means that there are concessional loans of up to \$650,000 with a \$50,000 grant program which is based on a 25 per cent component of that. In relation to the area of Central Queensland, south-west Queensland and southern Queensland, the Premier has written to the Prime Minister around category D assistance for places that have been severely impacted. We will continue to negotiate with the Commonwealth government around that assistance, but the general severity of Cyclone Yasi was recognised by the federal government and it made that announcement this morning. I personally have spoken with Joe Ludwig. The protocol is that the Premier must write to the Prime Minister, so we have followed those protocols. I have been involved in discussions with the Treasurer, and the Treasurer is leading the negotiations for the Queensland government in relation to further assistance.~~

~~**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The time for question time is over.~~

## QUEENSLAND RECONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY BILL

### Message from Governor



**Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (12.01 pm): I present a message from Her Excellency the Governor.

The Speaker read the following message—

MESSAGE

QUEENSLAND RECONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY BILL 2011

*Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68*

I, PENELOPE ANNE WENSLEY AC, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intitled—

A Bill for an Act to establish the Queensland Reconstruction Authority and provide for other measures to assist with the rebuilding and recovery of Queensland communities affected by disaster events, and to amend this Act, the Building Act 1975, the Disaster Management Act 2003, the Integrity Act 2009, the Land Valuation Act 2010, the Public Service Act 2008 and the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971 for particular purposes.

GOVERNOR

(sgd)

Date: 15 FEB 2011

*Tabled paper:* Message, dated 15 February 2011, from Her Excellency the Governor recommending the Queensland Reconstruction Authority Bill.

### First Reading

**Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (12.03 pm): I present a bill for an act to establish the Queensland Reconstruction Authority and provide for other measures to assist with the rebuilding and recovery of Queensland communities affected by disaster events, and to amend this act, the Building Act 1975, the Disaster Management Act 2003, the Integrity Act 2009, the Land Valuation Act 2010, the Public Service Act 2008 and the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971 for particular purposes. I present the explanatory notes, and I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Reconstruction Authority Bill 2011.

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Reconstruction Authority Bill 2011, explanatory notes.

## Second Reading



**Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (12.03 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

This truly has been the summer of sorrow as our state and its people have faced unprecedented natural disasters. Just as most of Queensland was recovering from the flooding that swamped Queensland in December and January, Tropical Cyclone Yasi inflicted a path of damage south of Cairns and north of Townsville.

These have been immense events. We suffered substantial loss of life and people saw their homes destroyed, their lives, livelihoods, businesses and farms overturned and their communities shaken to their foundation. But the endurance and resilience of Queenslanders is remarkable. Together our state and our people will undertake the massive recovery and rebuilding process. The task before us is greater than any we have faced. To meet that task, the government will establish the Queensland Reconstruction Authority to spearhead the work.

The Queensland Reconstruction Authority Bill 2011 will establish an authority to scope and coordinate the state-wide rebuilding program and to cut through red tape and any other barriers that would stand in the way of swift recovery and rebuilding. The QRA will work in cyclone affected communities in North Queensland as well as the 60-plus flood affected communities across the state. Major General Mick Slater will chair the authority, with former Coordinator-General Graeme Newton as the CEO. An office of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority will be established in North Queensland and will be dedicated to cyclone recovery. It will be headed by Chief Superintendent Mike Keating, who will be seconded from the Queensland Police Service.

Our message is this: no-one and no part of Queensland will be forgotten. The rebuilding of small rural communities is just as important and just as urgent as the rebuilding of the state's cities and major regional centres. Under the bill, the authority will prioritise the work needed to rebuild community infrastructure and services in flood and cyclone affected communities; it will coordinate and manage the rebuilding and recovery of affected communities, including the repair and rebuilding of community infrastructure and property; and it will coordinate the distribution of financial assistance for affected communities. The bill vests the QRA with significant powers to ensure proper and expedited planning, preparation, coordination and control of development for rebuilding and recovering affected communities.

Local government will retain primary responsibility for land use and building approvals. The QRA will have powers to be exercised within declared areas or projects to expedite or intervene in regulatory decisions or approval processes or directly undertake planning functions or development. This will include the power to compulsorily acquire property required for reconstruction within reconstruction areas, but only where this is strictly necessary for reconstruction or to manage and mitigate the impacts of natural disasters. We intend that these powers be used only by exception and with the full cooperation of local government where absolutely necessary to facilitate the construction effort.

The QRA will work collaboratively with local government and other regulatory agencies to secure appropriate approvals and expedited reconstruction works in the first instance. But the powers granted by the bill will ensure the QRA is able to cut through and intervene by declaring a reconstruction area or project where necessary to expedite reconstruction, recovery and disaster management efforts.

The powers vested with the authority are adopted from existing powers available under various acts—the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971, the Urban Land Development Authority Act 2007 and the Sustainable Planning Act 2009. This will ensure legislative consistency across our planning and development approval laws while centralising relevant planning, decision-making, acquisition and works powers within the QRA.

Finally, the bill contains a sunset clause to wrap up the QRA after two years, recognising that the focus of the authority will be to fast-track the rebuilding effort and get Queensland back on to a business-as-usual footing as quickly as possible. The work set down for the Queensland Reconstruction Authority cannot be underestimated. The sooner reconstruction commences and is completed, the sooner Queenslanders' lives can be restored, the sooner our social fabric can be repaired and the sooner our tourism, small businesses, farms, mines and other industries can get back to normal, the sooner we can get our state and national economic growth back on the rails. As Queensland moves from disaster response to disaster recovery, the government will continue to stand alongside our flood and cyclone affected citizens. The Queensland Reconstruction Authority will greatly assist in

concentrating the effort to return to normality and beyond as quickly and as effectively as possible, and I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Langbroek, adjourned.

017

## MOTION

### Natural Disasters

~~Resumed from 15 February (see p. 87), on motion of Ms Bligh~~

~~That this House—~~

- ~~1. acknowledges with great sadness the devastation caused in Queensland by the natural disasters that this State has endured since December 2010;~~
- ~~2. extends its condolences and deepest sympathy to the families and loved ones of those killed in the natural disasters;~~
- ~~3. grieves for those who have suffered injury and who have lost their homes, property and personal possessions and extends our support for their recovery;~~
- ~~4. places on record its sincerest gratitude for the leadership and the valued contribution of the police, emergency service and medical teams, defence personnel, federal, state and local government and private sector employees, and community and voluntary service providers, together with the thousands of workers and volunteers from Queensland, other parts of Australia and overseas, who have selflessly contributed so much in difficult and often dangerous circumstances to help affected communities;~~
- ~~5. sincerely acknowledges the many fundraising activities which have been organised and thanks the people and governments in Australia and overseas who have sent messages of support and sympathy and who have generously donated resources and funding to assist our fellow Queenslanders; and~~
- ~~6. pledges to work with affected communities and all levels of government, as Queensland recovers from these natural disasters and is rebuilt.~~



~~Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (12.08 pm): I join in the motion of condolence moved by the Premier. I can only talk of the aching sorrow that I feel for the friends and families of those who perished in the events that have occurred in Queensland from north to south since December 2010. In no way can I, of course, feel the pain that those friends and family feel, but my heart does ache for them and for their loss. Can I also acknowledge the contribution of members here yesterday and later on today from across the partisan divide and from across the state. I join with many members in extending my sympathy, support and admiration to the members for Lockyer and Hinchinbrook—two men I am proud to count among my friends. I also commend the work of Ann Rickuss in helping Ian and the people who were so tragically affected in their community.~~

~~I am sure I was not the only member in this place to get a little glassy eyed while listening to the member for Lockyer relate the tales of the wall of water that fell upon the towns and hamlets of his electorate. We also heard yesterday of the passion that the member for Hinchinbrook feels for his electorate. I must say that I marvel at his resilience, his perseverance and his humour in the toughest of times—a true North Queenslander. I have listened with a sense of awe and wonder to the stories that have been told in this place, including those relayed by the honourable the Premier and the honourable the Leader of the Opposition. I extend my sympathies to all of those who suffered, whether from the Central Queensland floods, the flash flooding in Toowoomba and the Lockyer, the floods in Ipswich and Brisbane and, of course, severe Tropical Cyclone Yasi. I also express my thanks and admiration to the members of the Queensland Police Service, the emergency services, and all of those who were called upon to help and assist our communities. In particular, I mention, as others have done, Deputy Commissioner Ian Stewart, who did such a tremendous job in leading the disaster team. Who but the most heartless could remain unaffected by the natural forces that have been visited on our great state and who but the most empty and hollow could not feel a sense pride in the way Queenslanders of every stripe and shade came together to help each other, to support each other, to comfort each other—in fact, to display what Abraham Lincoln described as the better angels of our nature.~~

~~The effects of the Brisbane floods on the electorate of Clayfield have not factored in too many news stories. They have not made the headlines. That is as it should be when one looks at the devastation suffered in other parts of Queensland. But the grasping tentacles of the floodwaters did extend to the businesses and a few—thankfully a few—homes in Clayfield. Of course, the Emergency Services headquarters building is, in fact, located in my electorate of Clayfield. Thankfully, it remained high and dry. With Breakfast Creek on one boundary, the sleeping Leviathan of the Brisbane River on another and the bay on another, the people of Clayfield are always aware of the possibility of flooding. Indeed, it happens on a fairly frequent basis when the king tides flow in and the rain falls. But the magnitude of the wall of water coming down the Brisbane River did stir people into extra action. As the suburbs of Pinkenba and Albion started to look like they would be experiencing a very damp evening, locals, emergency services and the council swung into action.~~

~~The Pinkenba Community Association, through its president, Ted Slater, started contacting local families to find out who was at home, who was on holidays, who was mobile and who was not—in effect, to start putting together an emergency plan, a disaster plan. Names were taken and lists were compiled~~