



Speech by

Hon. Tim Mulherin

MEMBER FOR MACKAY

Hansard Tuesday, 2 June 2009

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Hinchinbrook Shire, Flood Recovery Assistance

Hon. TS MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland) (10.18 am): On 17 April the Hinchinbrook Shire Council wrote to the Bligh government seeking recovery assistance following monsoonal flooding after tropical cyclones Charlotte and Ellie. The Hinchinbrook Shire Council was seeking assistance beyond standard NDRRA measures. The council provided the government with two reports: a primary industries initial economic impact assessment and an initial business impact survey.

On 19 May 2009 I discussed the issue with Hinchinbrook shire mayor and representatives of Canegrowers. As with the additional assistance announced on 25 May for flood-affected regions in northern New South Wales, today I am pleased to announce that the Queensland government has written to the Prime Minister seeking approval to provide recovery grants for small business and primary producers impacted by tropical cyclones Charlotte and Ellie.

Whilst it has been some time since these severe flooding events, there is mounting evidence that small business and primary producers in Hinchinbrook and North-West Queensland are struggling to recover. After an assessment of the reports compiled by affected councils, I consider recovery grants are appropriate. There has been significant damage to cane crops, paddocks and haulage infrastructure in Hinchinbrook shire. There have also been extensive stock losses, damage to farm infrastructure and council infrastructure in North-West Queensland.

Likewise, many small businesses suffered significant damage due to the prolonged periods of flooding in towns such as Ingham, Karumba and Normanton. I have requested that small businesses and primary producers in the worst affected parts of the state be considered for special assistance grants of up to \$15,000 for restoration activities. These areas of the state were also eligible for concessional loans for primary producers and freight subsidies in the wake of the flooding. The council areas being considered for the special assistance grants are Burke, Carpentaria, Cloncurry, Croydon, Doomadgee, Etheridge, Hinchinbrook, McKinlay and Richmond. These special assistance grants will assist the affected communities with their recovery and is proof that the Bligh government is intent on protecting jobs in primary industries and in small communities across the state.