



Speech by

# Hon. Cameron Dick


MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard Thursday, 17 February 2011

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## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Flood and Cyclone Legal Help Service

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.20 am): For the past two days this chamber has heard some heartbreaking and harrowing accounts of the impacts of floods and cyclones on communities across Queensland. Now that the floodwaters have receded and the cyclones have, for now, dissipated, the Queensland government is focused on helping affected communities recover as quickly as possible. This is certainly a primary concern within my portfolio areas of Justice and Industrial Relations.

One of the key responses, as I mentioned yesterday, was the Flood and Cyclone Legal Help service. This free service is operating in all regions affected by the recent natural disasters—areas such as Brisbane, Ipswich, the Darling Downs and south-west, Bundaberg and Wide Bay-Burnett, Rockhampton, Townsville and Cairns. Last week, more than 500 people attended free community forums organised by this service at Ipswich, Goodna and Karalee. Another eight forums are planned for South-East Queensland and extra forums will be arranged for regional Queensland. Almost 2,000 hits have been recorded on the website that was set up for this service—[floodlegalhelp.qld.gov.au](http://floodlegalhelp.qld.gov.au)—and more than 100 people have received free legal advice. Flood and Cyclone Legal Help can also be accessed through toll-free number 1300651188.

Several other initiatives are also being implemented within Justice and Industrial Relations to help Queenslanders get back on their feet sooner. Fees to replace important documents such as birth and marriage certificates have been waived in areas affected by floods and cyclones. We are also allowing flood and cyclone victims who have outstanding fines with the State Penalties Enforcement Registry to have enforcement action suspended.

From a workplace health and safety perspective, inspectors have conducted almost 1,600 field visits to flood affected businesses. Asbestos experts have also been deployed in Far North Queensland to help residents, employers and councils manage the risks posed by asbestos during the clean-up. A special hotline—1800177717—has also been set up to provide advice about asbestos safety. These initiatives are designed to assist flood and cyclone affected communities and are part of the Bligh government's commitment to helping victims recover from these disasters as quickly as possible.