



Speech by

# Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard Thursday, 10 March 2011

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## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### National Disasters, Schools

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Greenslopes—ALP) (Minister for Education and Industrial Relations) (9.59 am): Rebuilding Queensland schools after our state's summer of sorrow is a top priority for the Bligh government. Communities were battered and swamped by floods and cyclones during the past two months, and so were many of our schools. But just as Queensland communities have shown extraordinary determination and resolve to recover from these setbacks, so too have Queensland schools.

A total of 186 schools were damaged during Cyclone Yasi last month—and, thanks to the hard work of school communities, the Department of Education and Training and QBuild, all were reopened within seven school days. Of the 92 state schools damaged in the devastating floods, 89 were open for business on the first day of the 2011 school year. These mighty efforts meant that thousands of students were able to continue their education in familiar surroundings.

Today my thoughts are with those school communities facing a second round of damage and disruption from heavy rainfall in North and Far North Queensland. Eight state schools are closed due to flooding this morning, with several others open but difficult to access due to road closures.

I am pleased to report that after an extraordinary clean-up and repair effort Milton State School students and teachers returned to their own classrooms last week. Milton was one of the three schools so badly damaged in the floods that classes had to be moved temporarily—in this case to the Academy for Science, Mathematics and Technology at Toowong. The recovery and rebuild at Milton was completed well ahead of schedule and all grounds and buildings passed safety checks.

When I was appointed as the education minister just over two weeks ago, I made it a priority to visit disaster affected schools. On my second full day in the job, I toured Silkwood, El Arish and Tully state schools and Tully State High School in Far North Queensland. Tully State High was by far the school hit hardest by Cyclone Yasi, with extensive damage including the destruction of the top floor of B block.

I was pleased to be able to tour the school with the member for Hinchinbrook and acknowledge his advocacy for affected parts of his electorate. Repairs are well underway at the school, support is being offered to students to ensure they are not disadvantaged in their studies and consultation is taking place to give the school community a voice in developing significant rebuilding plans. I have also visited Port Curtis Road State School in Rockhampton and intend to visit flood affected schools in Toowoomba and the Lockyer Valley next week.

Many Queensland schools face a long road to recovery following the floods and cyclones. But the Bligh government is focused on rebuilding our schools so that principals, teachers and other valuable school staff members can get on with the important job of educating young Queenslanders.