



Speech by


Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR STAFFORD

Hansard Wednesday, 23 March 2011

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Natural Disasters Jobs and Skills Package

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining) (10.06 am): Every day since the natural disasters hit Queensland this government has been working to repair the damage and help people rebuild their lives. One way we are doing this is through our joint \$83 million jobs and skills package with the federal government. A key plank in the initiative is the use of the Green Army to provide employment and training opportunities for Queenslanders. Through the Green Army initiative, people who have been disengaged from work have been given a chance to carry out jobs that give them hands-on experience. For instance, I have seen firsthand participants involved in weed eradication and land restoration projects at the Wyaralong Dam. Participants such as these have an opportunity to develop valuable skills while being in work full time and being paid.

Under the jobs and skills package, 16 projects worth \$6.38 million have already been approved, creating some 351 jobs for Queenslanders in flood affected communities. Projects are currently underway in Toowoomba, Rockhampton, Ipswich, Gympie, the Sunshine Coast hinterland, Mundubbera, Murgon, Bundaberg, Cherbourg and Brisbane. More projects will be rolled out as we work towards our target of employing 2,400 Queenslanders through the Green Army initiative. The work already being done is varied and includes restoration of local community facilities and national parks as well as restoration of beaches, riverbanks and foreshores.

The members for Ipswich and Ipswich West will be pleased to hear that the Ipswich City Council has been approved for a \$3 million grant to employ 160 Green Army workers. The troop will receive valuable experience as they work through the council's Health, Parks and Recreation Department to help the Ipswich community rebuild.

Another key aspect of this is the deployment of jobs and skills development officers. Skills Queensland is coordinating this very important aspect of the package and has written to some 13 councils such as Cassowary Coast, Banana, Toowoomba, Western Downs, Lockyer Valley, Brisbane, Ipswich and others which have been identified as priority regions. Local departmental staff will work with councils to process the applications as quickly as possible. Once employed, the officers will work closely with local councils to provide job opportunities for Queenslanders.

This is what we are about: providing jobs and job opportunities for Queenslanders. This is something the government has promised to do and we are about delivering it. We have the strong and stable leadership to deliver for Queenslanders. We have a leader in this House who is prepared to deliver for Queensland.