




Speech By  
**Hon. Tim Nicholls**

**MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD**

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**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Natural Disaster Events of 2013, Regional Businesses**

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (2.15 pm): I do not know how to follow that up, Madam Speaker, but I am sure I will. It has been a tough few months for many businesses in regional Queensland, but I can assure our trading partners that the great state of Queensland is open for business. Food, beverage and other manufacturing industries in Bundaberg were not only flooded but also severely impacted by the damage to the natural gas pipeline where it crosses the Burnett River. Some manufacturers have had no choice but to undertake a costly conversion to other energy sources to maintain their production.

Mundubbera and Gayndah, as large citrus-growing regions, supply over 50 per cent of Australia's lemons and mandarins and the Bundaberg region produces crops such as sugar, avocados, macadamias, tomatoes, capsicums, peas and chilli. The impact of this disaster has meant crop losses, delayed harvesting and damage to fencing, irrigation and farm equipment. Citrus Australia has been proactive in informing buyers that, while these regions will have a slightly delayed harvest, there will be no shortage of produce. I want to emphasise that: no shortage of produce. I am told that Woolworths Australia has given a commitment that it will not import fruit to fill any supply gaps resulting from flooding. It typically imports lemons from the US for 10 weeks each year when Australian lemons are not in season. So that is good news.

International industry and business associations are lending a hand, too. The Australian Chinese Association of Hong Kong, the Australian Association of Hong Kong and the Australian Chamber of Commerce Hong Kong and Macau, along with several Hong Kong businesses, joined forces last month to donate the equivalent of A\$10,500 to the Queensland flood appeal. Importantly, Trade and Investment Queensland has also been assisting through the market recovery action initiative. Via its global network of 17 locations, TIQ has assured overseas buyers that Queensland can uphold its supplier commitments. We remain a reliable supplier of fresh and safe food, beverage and agricultural products.

Within three days, two officers from Trade and Investment Queensland's regional offices were on the ground making sure that growers knew there was someone there to help them market their produce. Maintaining business ties within international export markets is critical to the recovery of these businesses and their communities. That is why Queensland's overseas trade representatives will this week travel across the state to meet directly with businesses and industry groups. Our trade commissioners are on the ground in the areas affected.

These commissioners provide Queensland businesses with invaluable in-country contacts, enabling them to take their products and services to the world. Last financial year Queensland's total exports contributed almost \$61 billion to the state's bottom line. With the assistance of Trade and Investment Queensland, London based Murphy Group UK invested \$70 million into a joint venture in

the Surat Basin with Queensland company Pipe and Civil. The gas project started with 120 workers and now employs more than 800 people.

Queensland mining technology company Industrea recently sold 12 drilling guidance advice devices at a cost of \$18 million to Biotop, an American company that imports mining equipment into Russia. Industrea's ongoing success resulted in the company being sold to GE Mining in a \$700 million transaction—value for Queensland. Two-way trade is vital to the Queensland economy. With the help of Trade and Investment Queensland, the Newman government will assist flood affected businesses get back on their feet sooner. It is a great state with great opportunity.