




Speech By
Andrew Cripps

MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

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ADJOURNMENT

Paluma, Water Supply

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (8.46 pm): One of the privileges of being the member for Hinchinbrook is the opportunity to represent the beautiful village of Paluma, located on top of the Paluma Range, about 80 kilometres north-north-west of Townsville. Paluma is totally surrounded by the Paluma Range National Park. I have a great affection for this little community and enjoy my regular visits there.

Paluma has a small permanent population, but it has a proud history. The settlement originally developed out of the mining and timber industries from the 1870s. The tin mining industry lasted until local residents worked out it was having an impact on the creeks used to supply Paluma with drinking water, and it is Paluma's current water supply situation that I wish to discuss.

This issue is not one of water scarcity but of water quality. For the last seven months, Paluma has been under a boil water direction from its potable water supplier, the Townsville City Council, due to concerns the water supply is contaminated with cryptosporidium and giardia bacteria. For seven months, local residents have had to boil their potable water, much to their frustration and inconvenience.

The problem is that Paluma is not connected to the Townsville City Council's town water supply network. It does not access water from nearby Lake Paluma, which does supplement the supply of potable water to the rest of Townsville. Paluma's supply is drawn from a small weir on a nearby creek. The residents understand that the supply in this reservoir is being spoiled by feral animals wallowing in and befouling the water.

The lengthy duration of this direction to boil water is taking its toll on Paluma. In addition to the local residents and the many visitors to Paluma, including tourists, there are two environmental education centres—one operated by Education Queensland and one by Catholic Education—which accommodate large numbers of visiting school students every year. There are also a number of small businesses, including cafes and accommodation houses, which depend on a reliable supply of good quality potable water to service their customers.

The residents of Paluma are actively engaged in a conversation with the Townsville City Council as the responsible supplier of the community's potable water. However, I have been approached by a number of constituents in Paluma about what rights they may have as consumers to be supplied with potable water.

Tomorrow I will table a question on notice to the Minister for Water Supply drawing his attention to the situation and seeking advice as to what role the Queensland Water Supply Regulator may have in addressing this concerning situation. Under the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008, the Water Supply Regulator has a role in monitoring drinking water quality management plans, and drinking and recycled water quality incident reporting and management. After seven months of being subjected to a boiled water direction from their water supplier, the residents of Paluma are keen to know what the Water Supply Regulator will have to say about their circumstances.