



Speech By  
**Robbie Katter**


**MEMBER FOR TRAEGER**

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**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Floods, Recovery Assistance; Hughenden, Hydro-Electric Scheme**

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (2.36 pm): I would like to talk about the floods recovery assistance. It has been eight weeks now, and people out there are repairing fences and water infrastructure. There are people missing out, though, unfortunately. Local, state and federal government assistance has been commendable to this point. There are gaps, though.

Places in Charters Towers that fall just outside those shire boundaries are therefore unable to get access to category C assistance, despite having been washed out just like their neighbours who fall inside the area. They receive nothing or they cannot claim anything. That rigid criteria for category C needs to be looked at, particularly in the Etheridge shire and Charters Towers shire. I think we have about seven people on our books now who have called the office who at this stage will get none of that assistance. A lot of that assistance has gone out from both the federal and state governments and has been very effective so far.

At the moment businesses in town cannot claim. They are just as important as the graziers but, unless water has run through their place and touched their business, they cannot claim a cent of any of that meaningful assistance. That makes it very difficult, particularly if their business relies 100 per cent on the cattle industry, which has had an estimated 600,000 head of livestock wiped out. There is a big gap there, and there are equity issues there as well.

The taxpayer expects assistance money to be spent fairly, and we are talking about a fairly small quantum of businesses. We have truckies, contractors and town businesses. There is a good opportunity to look at the overall strategy, because there is about \$4 million or \$5 million in charity coming in now. Whilst the government money seems to be easier to facilitate towards the cattle grazing industry, it always seems very hard to punch that into the local businesses.

My view is that the bulk of that charity money should be focused into those towns and the businesses where it would marry up with the quantum of assistance required. They are often not quite as big a business so they do not need as much money. There are not many businesses out there, but a lot of them cannot touch any of that money, and they hurt just as much, proportionately, as people in the cattle industry. That is something that really needs tightening up.

The last thing I mention is the HIPCO irrigation scheme for water storage in Hughenden. It was very pleasing to bolt on a hydro component to that. We had a good meeting with the department of state development yesterday, and I appreciate that—the minister is sitting there—but there is \$180 million from the feds to provide a hydro-electric scheme that will punch into that \$150 million energy loop that the government has committed to to get a transmission line to Hughenden. That will be lost if it is not backed by the government. All we need is assistance. We do not need any money from the government; we just need assistance to facilitate that and make that work and we can do some irrigation activities on the side.