




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

Record of Proceedings, 12 February 2019

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Floods, Recovery Assistance

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (10.12 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to supporting Townsville's small business community after the devastating floods. We know that recovery will be long, but we will be there supporting small businesses every step of the way. Just as Central Queensland small businesses impacted by the devastating bushfires late last year had access to disaster relief, we are here to provide assistance to Townsville small businesses that have been affected by the floods.

Today I am very pleased to announce that in a Queensland recovery first, in cooperation with the Townsville City Council and the Townsville Chamber of Commerce, we have opened a new Small Business Recovery Hub in Townsville to connect business owners with help and support. The Small Business Recovery Hub is located on the ground floor of the State Government Building in Stanley Street, opposite the Townsville Community Recovery Centre. The hub will open from 9 am to 5 pm daily, seven days a week, for as long as it takes to help small business get back on their feet.

From the hub, small business will be able to get wrap-around support. Already, disaster assistance includes concessional loans of up to \$250,000 and essential working capital loans of up to \$100,000 for small businesses. I am aware that the Premier has written to the Prime Minister seeking to expedite additional support for small businesses under category C of the National Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements.

In the meantime, we are wasting no time on the ground getting word out that help is available. As the Townsville Chamber of Commerce CEO, Marie-Claude Brown, said—

The opening of a small business recovery centre, a week after the last rain drop, is a positive step forward for our business community.

Queensland Small Business Champion Maree Adshead will also be on hand to work with council and the local chamber as they set up the hub for its first day of operation.

We know that one of the easiest and most productive ways of supporting recovery is to give small business your business during recovery. Our Small Business Hub will also launch the Go Local campaign and engage local businesses to support the recovery efforts. Stakeholders, particularly key local representatives such as the Townsville Chamber of Commerce, Townsville Enterprise and the Townsville Business Development Centre have been engaged to support service delivery from the hub. Having experienced locals on the ground to talk to businesses face to face will help family run enterprises navigate their own recovery and link them with services in a timely manner.

Small businesses are absolutely the lifeblood of our communities and during the larger recovery process it is crucial that we continue to support them. We can all do our part to support Townsville small businesses: Go Local and back Townsville businesses and Townsville jobs during the recovery.