




Speech By
Hon. Nikki Boyd

MEMBER FOR PINE RIVERS

Record of Proceedings, 12 June 2024

MOTION

Far North Queensland, Infrastructure

 **Hon. N BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (Minister for Fire and Disaster Recovery and Minister for Corrective Services) (5.55 pm): I was walking into the chamber just before following two opposition members and I heard one of them say, 'What's her name?' and the other one said, 'Bree.' It is great to be able to teach the LNP the names of their candidates. They got her to come all the way down here for tonight's motion. I am sure they did not drive. It is great to have them here.

I was sworn in as the Minister for Disaster Recovery a week after Tropical Cyclone Jasper crossed the coast. I spent many weeks after that in the Far North through December and January. It was there that I saw firsthand the hardworking members of our government respond to natural disasters and support the Far North through the immediate recovery. These MPs worked tirelessly to understand the impact of the natural disaster on their communities and to address what we could do to support the recovery efforts.

Every natural disaster is different. This one impacted an enormous space through our state's Far North. I visited numerous communities and some of them had been impacted by disasters many times. I have ensured that the recovery agency, the nation-leading Queensland Reconstruction Authority, is working with the federal agency, the National Emergency Management Agency, to deliver the support where and when it is needed. That is why we have delivered a massive \$29.25 million Far North Queensland Tourism Recovery and Resilience Program which includes business grants, infrastructure grants, hardship assistance and tourism promotion, along with grants for small business, not-for-profits and primary producers.

I saw firsthand day-to-day the phenomenal efforts of our Main Roads crews. Like the member for Barron River, I want to give them a massive shout-out for the work they did to re-establish disconnected roads and essential arteries. The Gillies Range, the Kuranda Range, the Captain Cook Highway, the Palmerston, the Cape Tribulation Road and the Bloomfield Track were all devastated during this event. Just yesterday I had feedback from our CEO of the QRA, Major General Jake Ellwood, who was in Wujal Wujal on Friday when we welcomed that community back. It was so fantastic to see that. He travelled via car from Wujal Wujal down the Bloomfield Track, the Cape Tribulation Road and the Captain Cook Highway to the Cairns Airport—something that we did not think we would see for many more months. The Captain Cook Highway was riddled with landslips and was reopened in an amazingly impressive time by TMR.

Frontline emergency services personnel were not just saving lives; they were also ensuring infrastructure could be salvaged and functional. Our firies were responsible for removing blockages from the Barron delta water infrastructure to ensure Cairns never ran out of drinking water. Just this summer the QRA has completed damage assessments on 3,083 properties, and 824—or roughly 27 per cent—of them are now damage free. For the remaining 2,259 properties still damaged, repair

works have begun on 774 of these, which means more than 34 per cent are on track for recovery. More than \$78 million in personal hardship grants have been paid out to 375,000 people in Queensland this summer disaster season. We have seen 1,189 grants to primary producers. A massive amount of Queensland has been covered in disaster and declared disaster activated this season.

What do we see from the LNP? We saw the member for Kawana fly into Cairns post Christmas with a media stunt—hand over a hamper, have a crack at the Premier and then take off. I have really disturbing accounts directly from the opposition that the Leader of the Opposition could not get members of his own team, people who want to be ministers in this state, to come off their leave and head up to Far North Queensland to communities that were in disarray and in devastation.

We saw from the LNP this summer only that they wanted to play politics with this, rather than actually help communities. The former mayor of Douglas Shire Council was great. He was working the best he could to try to stop TMR from actually fixing Cape Tribulation Road, and it is no wonder his preselection bid for Cook failed. But who did we get instead? We get David Kempton, who is an LNP recycled candidate. On three occasions in a recent interview, he was asked if he had any regrets—three chances to apologise for public servant sackings and asset sales—but, no, he was pretty content with his performance which we know only means one thing: if they get the chance, they are going to do it again—cut, sack and sell.

(Time expired)