




Speech By
Hon. Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

North Queensland, Weather Events

 **Hon. A LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (Minister for Local Government and Water and Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers) (9.48 am): North Queensland has been devastated by a severe weather event that has seen more than two metres of rain across parts of the region. Unfortunately, it claimed two lives, and I extend my condolences to the family and friends. Flooding has left many facing damaged or destroyed homes and business premises. In Ingham and in other communities, on the streets you can see the piles of heartbreak from the businesses and family homes that have been flooded. However, there is one thing that our North Queensland communities can rely on: we have their backs.

Disaster arrangements have been activated quickly to unlock funding and support for those communities that have been impacted. We have also worked in a partnership with local governments to get North Queenslanders back on their feet. Part of this was the Mutual Aid Coordination Cell, a group of water operators who come together in times of disaster to lean into affected communities to provide support for water and sewerage operations. I know that mayors, councillors and council staff were working around the clock and also working alongside the LGAQ in their council-to-council program. I know that some mayors and councillors slept for many nights in their council chambers, being there to look after their communities. That included Mayor Raymon Jayo and Deputy Mayor Mary Brown in Hinchinbrook. Local governments know their communities best and they are crucial to getting clean water back in these communities.

The government stood up the community recovery hubs throughout the region for face-to-face support and for the 24/7 Community Recovery Hotline. Local governments were crucial in delivering this support and continue to be, as we move from disaster response to disaster recovery as part of this work of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority. I am pleased to advise that the Premier has appointed Andrew Cripps as the State Recovery Coordinator to spearhead recovery efforts. Mr Cripps is a North Queenslander; he is an Ingham local through and through. He brings a wealth of local knowledge and experience. The previous deputy state recovery coordinator has unfortunately stood aside, and I am pleased to advise that Inspector Paul Algie has taken over the role.

I want to give special thanks to the mayors, the councillors, the tireless council staff, the public servants, the support workers and the thousands of volunteers involved with this disaster recovery. They have been inspirational in their efforts to get those communities in our state's north back on a path to recovery.