

Question on Notice

No. 503

Asked on 6 August 2013

MR KRAUSE asked the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience (MR CRISAFULLI) –

QUESTION:

Will the Minister inform the Assembly how betterment initiatives and other initiatives of the government are assisting communities in their recovery from recent natural disasters?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for Beaudesert for his question.

The Betterment Fund is changing the way councils recover from natural disasters by stopping the replacement of vulnerable infrastructure with replicas that are destroyed in the next flood or cyclone event.

We can never flood-proof Queensland, but it just doesn't make sense to repair damaged assets again and again to a level where they'll only get flattened by the next natural disaster.

We have seen roads damaged across the State, severely isolating communities time and time again. The Betterment Fund has given councils the opportunity to build infrastructure that is more resilient to natural disasters. This will assist these communities in recovering after future events.

It's obvious that spending a bit more money now to save millions in the future makes perfect economic sense.

In addition to the Betterment Funding projects, the Queensland Government has provided funding to an extensive list of recovery projects in the hardest hit areas of the State.

The Queensland Government has committed \$2.5 million over two years for personal support, mental health and community development in the Bundaberg and North Burnett regions and \$10 million to fund on-farm productivity and environmental recovery in farming and grazing communities.

The Queensland Government has also committed \$1.5 million to establish an enhanced disaster loans scheme for primary producers and businesses and \$750,000 to provide financial advice to primary producers and businesses to assist with recovery planning. A further \$750,000 has been allocated for the establishment of an industry recovery package, which includes funding for up to 17 industry recovery officers. These officers will play vital roles in coordinating and facilitating assistance to producers.

Local governments will also benefit from the Local Government Floods Response Subsidy administered by the Department of Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience and the Royalties for the Regions funding administered by the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning. These programs will allow councils to provide their communities with critical infrastructure and projects to mitigate flooding by means such as the construction of levee banks, the flood-proofing of roads and the installation of backflow prevention devices. This investment from the Queensland Government is taking another step towards ensuring that Queensland is better positioned to deal with future natural disasters.

The Queensland Government will continue to work closely with the impacted communities to coordinate and manage the recovery from the recent disasters and to build resilience to future disaster events.