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## MEDIA RELEASE

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**For immediate release**

### **TOURISM NEEDS PLAN FOR THE FUTURE**

Member for Hinchinbrook, Andrew Cripps, says the tourism industry in the Hinchinbrook electorate, which has been devastated by Cyclone Yasi, needs a plan for the future beyond simply re-establishing the infrastructure that was in place before the recent disaster.

Mr Cripps said the tourism industry was a major employer for communities in his electorate between Innisfail and Cairns, but that many tourism operators would be seriously considering the prospects of another lean year when deciding whether or not to reopen.

“There are some tourism operators, tourist accommodation and businesses servicing the tourism industry that are operational, but obviously there will be a significant downturn in visitor numbers to the region because of the widespread damage” said Mr Cripps.

“Following Cyclone Larry in 2006 and the recent economic downturn, Cyclone Yasi really has made things difficult for tourism operators. A number of them will be thinking long and hard about reopening if there is little prospect of things improving in the near future” he said.

“What is needed is a vote of confidence in the tourism industry in the Hinchinbrook electorate. The State and Federal Governments need to bring forward infrastructure projects that do more than simply restore what we had before Cyclone Yasi” said Mr Cripps.

“For example, we need to urgently progress plans for much improved commercial and recreational boating facilities at Mission Beach. We need to make the proposed eco-accommodation project at Wallaman Falls, in the Herbert River district, happen” he said.

“We also need a real effort put into restoring roadside signage throughout the cyclone affected region that provide travellers with directions and information. This will really help tourist accommodation centres like Cardwell and Kurrimine Beach” said Mr Cripps.

“I support the calls by the Queensland Tourism Industry Council for a generous marketing campaign to promote Queensland tourism, but we also need to grasp this opportunity to build better tourist destinations, to give tourism operators confidence in the future” he said.

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