



---

## MEDIA RELEASE

---

**Date: Wednesday 30 March 2011**

**For immediate release**

### **CRIPPS' PATIENCE RUNS OUT WITH RECOVERY PROCESS**

Member for Hinchinbrook, Andrew Cripps, says he has run out of patience with aspects of the Cyclone Yasi recovery process and has targeted the federal/state NDRRA package and insurance companies for failing to meet the needs of cyclone affected communities.

Mr Cripps said he had tried to work with state and federal government agencies to address issues associated with the Cyclone Yasi assistance package, but these efforts had not resulted in outcomes that have supported cyclone affected communities in his electorate.

"It is now eight weeks since Cyclone Yasi caused massive amounts of damage to the Hinchinbrook electorate. The immediate emergency response phase has largely drawn to a close, but the recovery phase has only just started and we must get it right" said Mr Cripps.

"The NDRRA support package announced after Cyclone Yasi is inferior to the package that was delivered after Cyclone Larry. The criteria to access the grants and low interest loans are narrower and the red tape involved to access the assistance has increased" he said.

Mr Cripps said it was unacceptable that the federal and state governments had taken several weeks to finalise the eligibility criteria and the regulatory framework to support the roll out of the NDRRA package to small businesses and farmers affected by Cyclone Yasi.

"Both governments had a good blueprint in the form of the package released after Cyclone Larry. While some adjustments may have been needed, the failure of the Federal Government to sign off on the regulations for several weeks was appalling" said Mr Cripps.

"The hundreds of small businesses and farmers that submitted applications for these grants and loans have been waiting and waiting for them to be processed, but the state and federal governments have been dragging the chain. Frankly, it has slowed our recovery" he said.

Mr Cripps said his early calls for a fuel excise rebate to reduce the costs of running generators for several weeks and an assistance package for the transport industry to avoid a cost of living increase, were ignored by both the federal and state governments.

---

Contact:	Andrew Cripps MP Member for Hinchinbrook	Address: PO Box 1515 Ingham Qld 4850	Ph: 07 4776 1428 Fax: 07 4776 3503
	E-mail: <a href="mailto:Hinchinbrook@parliament.qld.gov.au">Hinchinbrook@parliament.qld.gov.au</a>		

---

“As a result, people faced huge costs to run generators for their homes and businesses for several weeks. Current high fuel costs exacerbated the problem. Freight costs for goods to North Queensland have increased significantly, putting pressure on prices” said Mr Cripps.

“While these important measures were left out of the support package altogether, industry, businesses and community representatives had to wage pitched battles to secure other vital aspects of the assistance package, such as industry development officers” he said.

“Fewer people are proving eligible for the \$25,000 Special Disaster Assistance Grant due to increased red tape. To access the Category D loans, farmers and businesses need to have exhausted all available liquid assets and extended their overdraft to its limit” said Mr Cripps.

“QRAA officers deployed to the area affected by Cyclone Yasi have been absolutely swamped with requests for assistance, which is an indication of how serious and widespread the damage is. Yet, the NDRRA support is reportedly harder to get” he said.

Mr Cripps said he was also receiving reports of households and businesses experiencing difficulties with insurance companies and encouraged his constituents to seek assistance from the Financial Services Ombudsman if they could not resolve insurance issues.

“One of the differences between the Yasi and Larry support packages was that after Larry, a number of independent insurance advisers were appointed to the Cyclone Larry Taskforce. These advisers assisted people with problems with their insurance” said Mr Cripps.

“These insurance advisers were experts. When there was a dispute between a policy holder and an insurance company, in many cases, the adviser was able to sort out the issue very quickly, usually with the assistance of the Building Co-ordination Centre” he said.

Mr Cripps said the performance of insurance companies varied and while some had acted quickly, others were failing to ensure claims by policy holders in the cyclone affected area were being assessed in a timely fashion and work orders issued so repairs could progress.

“The reality is, very little work could have been undertaken over the last eight weeks because of the ongoing wet weather. However, my concern is when it does fine up work won’t be able to start, because insurance issues will still be unresolved” said M Cripps.

“Some insurance companies have been good. Others are not distinguishing themselves. Assessments are one thing, but what policy holders really need are work orders so they can start organising repairs. We just don’t need any more problems holding us back” he said.