



MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

CYCLONE COMMUNITIES LOSE CONFIDENCE IN PREMIERS APPEAL

Hinchinbrook MP, Andrew Cripps, says his constituents in cyclone affected communities have been slow to lodge applications for Round 3 of the Premiers Disaster Relief Appeal because they had lost confidence in the way the disaster fund was being administered.

Mr Cripps said there was widespread confusion about the different criteria that applied to the three separate rounds of assistance available to individuals affected by Cyclone Yasi from the PDRA and frustration amongst eligible applicants who had been denied assistance.

“For months, the staff in my electorate office and I have been assisting individuals in cyclone affected communities who are clearly eligible for assistance, to have their applications reassessed after they were originally rejected by the PDRA” said Mr Cripps.

“My staff and I have had to intervene to help people in the Tully, Cardwell and Herbert River districts, who are clearly eligible, to get their rejected applications reviewed. This is time consuming and frustrating those in difficult circumstances that really need help” he said.

“There is an obvious lack of ground truthing in decisions made by the PDRA to reject applications by people in cyclone affected communities when their circumstances clearly make them eligible. I raised this issue in parliament over a month ago” said Mr Cripps.

“Anna Bligh is apparently concerned that people are not applying for Round 3, but last week I had a call from a constituent who had not had any advice about their Round 1 application, that they lodged eight weeks ago. No wonder they are not applying for Round 3” he said.

Mr Cripps said he had relied on an informal process of referring cases to the Members for Gregory and Rockhampton, Vaughan Johnson and Robert Schwarten, who were PDRA board members, to help him correct these mistakes and thanked them for their assistance.

“Much more effort needs to be put in by the Bligh Labor Government to ground truthing the decisions made by this disaster fund. People are losing confidence in it” said Mr Cripps.

“These are serious mistakes that are holding up our recovery process. Those people who donated want the funds to get to cyclone victims who need it in a timely fashion” he said.