



MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

CRIPPS SEEKS TO PROTECT CYCLONE SCHOOLS

Hinchinbrook MP, Andrew Cripps, has sought to protect schools in communities affected by Cyclone Yasi from being disadvantaged by restrictive 'day-eight' policies, which could see some schools lose teachers where enrolments have yet to recover to pre-cyclone numbers.

Mr Cripps said he had written to Education Minister, Cameron Dick, seeking an undertaking that no state school between Silkwood and Ingham would be disadvantaged as a result of a decline in enrolments and that staff levels would continue to be maintained at 2010 levels.

"After Cyclone Yasi last year, I wrote to the Education Minister seeking an undertaking that no cyclone affected schools would be disadvantaged as a result of a decline in enrolments in respect of viability reviews, funding or resources on the basis of enrolments" said Mr Cripps.

"I welcomed the Minister's response where he advised that schools in the area affected by Cyclone Yasi would continue to maintain staff numbers based on 2010 enrolment data, although program funding would continue to be based on enrolment numbers" he said.

"I have been inquiring about enrolment numbers at a number of schools in cyclone affected communities in week one of 2012 and have learned a number are struggling to reach enrolment thresholds that would see them maintain current staffing levels" said Mr Cripps.

"This concerns me greatly and has prompted me to write to the Education Minister again on this matter. Cyclone affected communities are still struggling with its recovery process following Yasi and the last thing our schools need is more disruption by losing staff" he said.

"The rebuilding and repair of family homes, business premises and public infrastructure is ongoing. Many families have still not returned to their homes for a range of reasons, including delays with insurance disputes, ongoing repairs, or rebuilding" said Mr Cripps.

"School teachers have been doing much more than just educating students in these classes. They have also been providing important emotional support. Larger class sizes would not be conducive at all in assisting school communities to recover from Cyclone Yasi" he said.

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