



Speech by

Andrew Cripps

MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

Hansard Thursday, 25 August 2011

MISSION BEACH, TOURISM

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (6.01 pm): I rise to draw to the attention of the House the triple whammy of setbacks that have hit the Mission Beach community and threaten to seriously undermine its economic recovery after Cyclone Yasi. Firstly, the decision by the current owners of the Dunk Island and Bedarra Island resorts not to rebuild those resorts has devastated not just tourism operators but also the whole Mission Beach community. Dunk Island is not only a tourism icon at Mission Beach; it is also a sentimental favourite for recreational use by local residents across the Cassowary Coast. The Bligh government must prioritise the re-establishment of infrastructure on the spit on Dunk Island and the walking tracks in the national park area to facilitate day-trip tourism and recreational visits by local residents. Tourism operators and locals want the infrastructure on the spit rebuilt and reopened as soon as possible.

Secondly, the Bligh government has released a new draft plan for a number of island national parks in my electorate. Proposals in this draft plan threaten to restrict the activities of the tourism industry and further restrict the recreational activities of locals, including on Dunk Island, which is a cornerstone of the tourism industry at Mission Beach. I urge local residents and tourism operators who have an interest in these island national parks to make a submission on the draft plan. Amazingly, it fails completely to recognise the significant damage done by Cyclone Yasi and the opportunity to replace damaged infrastructure with better or more appropriate infrastructure. The Bligh government's draft plan proposes to refuse permission for new infrastructure, further restrict access to the islands and extend fishing restrictions in certain areas. More regulations, red tape and lockouts would be a serious blow to tourism and the lifestyle of local residents in my electorate, particularly at Mission Beach.

Thirdly, we recently found out that the Bligh government has withdrawn the marine development area designation of the Clump Point boat harbour reserve under the new Queensland Coastal Plan. Planning for enhanced marine facilities was formalised many years ago, with the former Johnstone shire requesting the reserve in 1984. The Bligh government made the decision without any consultation with the Mission Beach community. The draft QCP that circulated for public consultation included the MDA. If the draft plan had proposed to remove it, the community would have spoken up. I have written to several ministers strongly objecting to this decision.

For years local boaties and tourism operators have struggled with the inadequate existing facilities and demanded safe and modern boating infrastructure. The withdrawal of the MDA will significantly set back the progress of an application to establish new infrastructure at Mission Beach and will increase the cost of any future proposal. I cannot believe the Bligh government has taken this decision after Mission Beach was so seriously impacted by Cyclone Yasi. Infrastructure projects will be very important to the economic recovery of business and tourism. This decision will significantly undermine business confidence at Mission Beach. It is critical that the Bligh government restores public infrastructure, not forces its restrictive draft island plan on tourism and locals, and that it overturns the removal of the MDA at Mission Beach.

(Time expired)