



Speech by

Andrew Cripps

MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

Hansard Wednesday, 22 April 2009

NORTH QUEENSLAND FLOODS; TULLY TAFE CAMPUS

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (9.45 pm): In the two months since this parliament last met, the people of my electorate have been busy. Many of them have been recovering from the serious flood event that was associated with Tropical Cyclone Ellie in February. Many have lent their collective support to several petitions in relation to important issues in the Hinchinbrook electorate about which I would like to talk briefly tonight. Two conforming petitions will be tabled tomorrow in this place. One relates to the recent major flood event that occurred in the Hinchinbrook shire causing significant damage to public and private property and the role that the build-up of river sand and sediment in the Herbert River played in the extent and severity of that flood. The other relates to the need for flood-free access over Palm Creek and for a dedicated emergency accommodation centre to be built in the township of Ingham. Both of these issues were brought into sharp focus during the recent major flood event in the Herbert River district in February this year. I endorsed these petitions in support of my constituents and look forward to the state government taking their concerns seriously and responding positively to them.

I seek leave to table a non-conforming petition on behalf of 463 residents in the communities of Cardwell, Mission Beach, El Arish, Feluga, Tully, Tully Heads, Euramo, Kennedy and Jumbun in my electorate of Hinchinbrook requesting that the Tully TAFE campus remain operational in Tully.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Leave is not required.

Mr CRIPPS: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Tabled paper: Non-conforming petition relating to the Tully TAFE Campus [\[95\]](#).

I was alarmed recently to learn that the TAFE campus at Tully had closed. It is clear that one of the most important things for Queensland job seekers in the current economic downturn is to ensure that they have the skills and qualifications to be competitive in the tightening jobs market. TAFE campuses are a very important asset and service in communities in regional and rural Queensland. In many cases, they offer the only technical and vocational education opportunities for individuals in those areas. As such, it is absolutely essential that TAFE campuses like the campus in Tully remain open and offering TAFE courses to the local community.

I have made inquiries with the Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE and it has indicated that the Tully TAFE campus has closed as a result of a lack of demand for courses. I have written to the director of the Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE requesting advice in relation to enrolments at the Tully campus in recent years and a comparison of those enrolments with other campuses that have remained open. I feel strongly that, as the current economic downturn continues, more and more workers, particularly those previously employed in the mining and minerals processing industries, will be returning to their home communities such as Tully where they will need to access training opportunities like those offered through TAFE and I am committed to working with the Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE to raise the profile of the courses offered at the Tully TAFE campus. Accordingly, I call on the Minister for Education and Training and the Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE to keep the Tully TAFE campus open so that local residents in the Tully district will have access to the technical and the vocational education opportunities that they need.