

community cabinet news

Townsville Region

February 2009

Premier's message



They say thirteen is an unlucky number and the severe weather events surrounding my 13th Community Cabinet would tend to confirm that.

The flooding at Ingham was foremost

on our minds during our stay in Townsville while the Community Cabinet events in Ayr had to be cancelled due to heavy rain.

A week after Community Cabinet, we learned of the horrific bushfires in Victoria. It reinforces the fragility of life in this country of ours and how important it is for governments and communities to keep the lines of communication open at all times.

Community Cabinet is our way of hearing first-hand the concerns, views and dreams of all Queenslanders. At Kirwan State High School on the Sunday and at the Barrier Reef Institute of TAFE on the Monday, my ministers and heads of departments were brought up to speed on a wide range of issues facing residents of the Townsville region.

Only by working with Queenslanders at all levels can we frame solutions to current economic problems and work together to create a strong and vibrant Queensland that brings prosperity and quality of life to all.

One of the great pleasures of Community Cabinet is meeting people who have served their community with distinction. On the back page of this newsletter are a number of photos of people who were presented with service awards during the 13th Bligh Government Community Cabinet.

Congratulations to all of you and may your service be an inspiration to others.

Anna Bligh MP
Premier of Queensland

Jobs, jobs, jobs – Bligh Gov't's top NQ priority

The State Government will stick with its multi-billion dollar public works program as a key regional jobs source, Premier Anna Bligh announced at the Regional Job Security Summit held during Community Cabinet in Townsville.

"We have a clear plan of attack and central in that is to keep driving our infrastructure program. We have allocated more than \$1.9 billion towards capital works in North and Far North Queensland this financial year and that supports around 13,200 jobs.

"As well we are undertaking or preparing for more than \$90 million for the Townsville Hospital, \$50 million to upgrade existing NQ power infrastructure, on-going road works worth hundreds

of millions (e.g. Townsville Ring Road, Stuart Bypass, Woodlands Shopping Centre to Veales Road) and more than \$25 million over five years towards construction of Townsville's V8 race precinct.

"We want to keep the foot on the pedal with these projects and to keep as many jobs as we can," she said.

More than 45 local industry and business representatives met with the Premier, Treasurer Andrew Fraser, Regional Development Minister Desley Boyle, and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland Craig Wallace, to discuss the economic challenges facing North Queensland.

Pimlico High laps it up



The 25,000th laptop in the State Government's \$70 million Computers for Teachers program was handed over by Minister for Education and Training Rod Welford to Pimlico State High School Year 8 teacher Christy Guinea.

Mr Welford said by the end of 2011, every permanent state school teacher, who works at least two days a week will have access to their own laptop.

Schools in the Townsville Education District receiving laptops through the Computers for Teachers program in early 2009 include **Pimlico SHS** – 108 laptops worth \$95,115 (including

\$7000 for professional development {PD}); **Thuringowa SHS** – 50 laptops worth \$44,894 (\$4100 for PD); **Cleveland Education and Training Centre** – 15 laptops worth \$14,588 (\$2350 for PD); **Townsville SHS** – 60 laptops worth \$53,552 (\$4600 for PD); **Townsville Community Learning Centre** – 31 laptops worth \$28,442 (\$3150 for PD); **Wulguru State School** – 31 laptops worth \$28,442 (\$3150 for PD); **Ayr East State School** – 36 laptops worth \$32,771 (\$3400 for PD); **Ayr SHS** – 47 laptops worth \$42,296 (\$3950 for PD); **Home Hill SHS** – 26 laptops worth \$24,112 (\$2900 for PD); **Ingham SHS** – 47 laptops worth \$42,296 (\$3950 for PD)

Announcements

Free mozzie repellent for schools

The Queensland Government is distributing free insect repellent to state and non-state schools in Cairns and Townsville to combat the dengue fever outbreak.

Premier Anna Bligh announced during Community Cabinet that the repellent will be given to more than 90 schools in the two Queensland cities where the outbreak has affected more than 250 people.

Research shows that the dengue mosquito prefers to bite humans during daylight – when children are in playgrounds or on sports fields. Parents will be provided with information about this important public health initiative and given the option to opt out.

Bestlan scores an Australian first

Townsville food company Bestlan Bananas has been awarded \$250,000 from the State Government's Business and Industry Transformation Incentives (BITI) scheme to install an innovative quality assurance system that will help open up new export markets.

Minister for Regional Development and Industry Desley Boyle said the family-run business at Bohle would become the nation's first food processing company to use the computerised production management system (MES).

Small to medium enterprises operating in Queensland's priority sectors can apply for between \$30,000 and \$250,000 for projects under the BITI scheme that have the potential to significantly expand their business, their industry and their region. The next round of BITI closes on 13 March 2009. For more info: www.industry.qld.gov.au/incentives

Life line for Townsville

Communities Minister Lindy Nelson-Carr announced that Lifeline Community Care Queensland will receive \$3 million over the next two years as part of the Bligh Government's commitment to increase counselling services throughout the state.

Two positions for financial counsellors would be created in the Townsville region to provide much-needed advice to locals impacted by job losses and the downturn in the economy.

Minister Nelson-Carr said in addition to lending a sympathetic ear, Lifeline's fully-trained counsellors can look at ways to help people better manage their financial affairs, such as developing a budget or helping to negotiate with creditors.

For more information or support call the Financial First Aid Hotline on 13 11 51.



Townsville Golf Club Development Advisory Group members Colin Harkness, left, and Bob Evennett, right, show plans for a housing development to the Member for Thuringowa and Minister for Natural Resources and Water and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland, Craig Wallace.



Minister for Communities and Member for Mundingburra Lindy Nelson-Carr with Twin Cities Aged Care representatives Donah and John Bobbert.



Premier Anna Bligh and Minister for Transport John Mickel presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Heatley State Primary School Lollipop Lady Mrs Rhonda Devene for 25-years of service. Rhonda is one of 21 original supervisors still turning out every school day since the service was launched in 1984.

Announcements

Smile for the camera, hoon!

Townsville commuters are better protected on the city's buses with more of the fleet now fitted with Closed Circuit Television (CCTV). Transport Minister John Mickel said at Community Cabinet the government was providing \$56,615 in funding for CCTV systems on 10 buses to complement the existing 26 in the city's urban bus fleet.

"The message for hoons and vandals who want to cause trouble and break the law on Townsville's buses is smile for the camera, because you will be caught," he said.

The Government is installing CCTV systems on eligible urban buses operated by Townsville Sunbus, Hermit Park Bus Service and Magnetic Island Bus Services.

Powering to a new career

During Community Cabinet, Mines and Energy Minister Geoff Wilson welcomed new recruits about to embark on keenly-sought after careers in Queensland's power industry.

Minister Wilson said that in the face of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, government-owned corporations remain committed to providing job opportunities for Queenslanders with the government-owned energy companies taking on 113 new apprentices and a number of new trainees.

In the first week of February, 46 apprentices began new jobs with Ergon Energy across regional Queensland.

NQ fashionable in US

Townsville fashion designer Katelyn Aslett is making a big impact overseas with her designs featured in New York as part of G'Day USA Australia Week 2009.

Katelyn, who won a Townsville Regional Export Award in 2006, already sells her fashions to Italy, France, Austria, Germany, Singapore and New Zealand.

During Community Cabinet, she met with Minister for Transport, Trade, Employment and Industrial Relations John Mickel to discuss Queensland fashion exporting challenges and opportunities.

Solar success on Magnetic Island

A ground-breaking solar trial on Magnetic Island will feature in a Greenpeace documentary about the benefits of solar power.

Mines and Energy Minister Geoff Wilson said the solar cities trial on Magnetic Island is delivering real benefits for the environment and the community with many households saving up to 30 per cent on their electricity bills.

The Queensland Government invested \$15 million into the initiative which was matched with \$15 million from the federal government and funds from consortium partners including Townsville City Council.



Backed by the Kirwan State High School Big Band conducted by Dale Hoskings, teacher Suellen Johns sings the national anthem at the Sunday Community Forum. Also pictured, back, Aiden Barker, Matthew Ritchie (trumpets) and Stuart Griffiths (keyboard), front, Emanuel Frewen-Lord (saxophone), Jessica Pearce and Mitchell Dunkin (clarinets).



At Townsville State High School, Health Minister Stephen Robertson launched the fourth phase of the successful *Go for 2 & 5* campaign as well as the new *Go for 2 & 5* Indigenous campaign. L to r: Minister Robertson; 4K1G's Valma Gara; Vegie Man; Kirwan State High School student and Australian Under 19 vigoro team member Zana Sampton; and Townsville Health Service District CEO Mary Bonner. Australian Opals basketballer and Beijing Olympics silver medallist Rohanee Cox is the face of the new campaign to encourage Indigenous families to "slam dunk" fruit and vegetables each mealtime.



As part of the latest round of *Blueprint for the Bush* funding, Premier Anna Bligh presented a \$20,000 cheque to Mayor of Burdekin Shire Council Lyn McLaughlin to develop the Burdekin Economic Development Strategic Plan.

Announcements

Lowering electricity bills

Mines and Energy Minister Geoff Wilson met with representatives of welfare groups in the Townsville region to outline steps the Bligh Government was taking to ease the financial burden for local households on a tight budget.

Mr Wilson said households and businesses right across regional Queensland had been given more than \$600 million to bring down the cost of their electricity bills while the electricity rebate for pensioners and seniors had been increased from \$145 to \$165.

“We also established a \$3 million hardship scheme for people who had difficulty meeting the cost of their electricity and gas bills,” he said.

Training for a better future

Education and Training Minister Rod Welford launched the FUTURES program, developed by Barrier Reef TAFE in collaboration with local industry and the Department of Housing to offer targeted, practical skills training to the long-term unemployed.

Mr Welford said the \$464,000 program aims to increase the employability of disadvantaged job seekers and directly address skills shortages in construction and related trades, such as carpentry and engineering, in North Queensland.

It is being funded by the Departments of Housing; Employment and Industrial Relations; and Education, Training and the Arts; and Construction Skills Queensland.

Protecting reef wetlands

Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation Minister, Andrew McNamara launched a suite of products to celebrate World Wetlands Day and protect the future of the state’s wetlands.

The products were delivered through the Queensland Wetlands Program as part of a \$23 million commitment by the Queensland and Australian governments to protect and restore wetlands.

Rehabilitation guidelines, prepared by WetlandCare Australia can be downloaded free from www.epa.qld.gov.au/wetlandinfo

Bands battle in Burdekin

Burdekin Shire Council has received \$2000 from the Queensland Government to hold the Battle of the Bands.

Communities and Youth Minister Lindy Nelson-Carr said the Battle of the Bands would give young people a forum to showcase their talents and get involved in the local community.



L to r: Townsville Chamber of Commerce President Craig Stack; Townsville Deputy Mayor David Crisafulli; Queensland Treasurer Andrew Fraser; Townsville Enterprise CEO Glenys Schuntner; Parliamentary Secretary Julie Attwood; and Chairman of Townsville Enterprise John Bearne.



Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council Mayor Alf Lacey and Speaker of the House and Member for Townsville Mike Reynolds.



Premier Anna Bligh and Emergency Services Minister Neil Roberts presented a service award to Guseppe Girgenti. Other award winners were Graham Thompson, John Winn, Primo Pilla, Algie Scarabel and Richard Murray.



Four of Townsville Hospital’s longest serving volunteers were awarded certificates of appreciation by Premier Anna Bligh. Clockwise from top left: Karen Inch (21 years volunteer service), Carmel Marchioli (15 years), Pat Caterer (16 years) and Suzie Bailey (15 years).



Premier Anna Bligh presented Mayor of Townsville Les Tyrell with a photograph from the Queensland State Archives titled “Looking across Ross River to Mount Stuart, 1897”.



Police officers who received service awards at the Community Cabinet luncheon were (l to r) Sergeant Frank Bebernitz, Senior Constable Stephen Hawes, Sergeant Paul Molloy, Senior Sergeant Mary-Anne Reaston and Senior Sergeant Adam Muir.