



Nick Dametto

Member For Hinchinbrook

MEDIA RELEASE

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Government leaves North Queensland up Buy Back creek without a paddle

North Queensland property owners who are frequently affected by flooding have been ignored by the State Government as they fail to extend the Voluntary Home Buy Back Program to include North Queensland.

Deputy Leader of the Katter's Australian Party (KAP) and Hinchinbrook MP, Nick Dametto said his calls on the State and Federal Governments to extend the Voluntary Home Buy Back Program to include North Queensland properties had fallen on deaf ears.

The Voluntary Buy-back program provides money to local Councils to purchase homes in 39 local government areas activated for Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements and was designed to help Queenslanders rebuild their properties following flood events and increase resilience to future flooding.

The program, which is jointly funded by the Queensland and Australian Governments under Category D of the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) includes a range of initiatives under the \$741 million Resilient Homes Fund¹ but does not include North Queensland on the list of eligible Local Government Areas (LGA's).

"We have recently seen the Government announce the first round of successful voluntary buy backs of flood affected properties in the south-east, with 23 homeowners the first to take up the offer," Mr Dametto said.

"North Queensland residents whose properties are constantly inundated by floodwaters during extensive weather events, haven't been afforded the opportunity to apply for voluntary buy backs as part of this program."

The Hinchinbrook MP said whilst he commended the Government's Resilient Homes Fund, he believes the \$741 million fund should be extended to all Queenslanders continually affected by significant weather events.

"There are multiple properties in the Hinchinbrook electorate that are often flooded during major rain events, this program neglects those regularly affected in North Queensland," Mr Dametto said.

"I receive calls every time the Northern Beaches gets three or four inches of rain from people whose properties are prone to flooding, they are living in a state of anxiety. Expanding the Voluntary Buy-back scheme to include their homes would help fix that and give these residents options.

"While I think the buy backs are a tangible solution for those hit hardest by the recent South-East weather events, it doesn't sit right that other areas of Queensland who endure floods year after year are excluded.

"There is no logical explanation as to why the \$741 million fund shouldn't be extended to all Queenslanders who are continually affected by flooding.

"I've taken this issue to the Minister asking if the State Government will extend the Voluntary Home Buy Back Program to North Queensland LGA's. Unfortunately, the lackluster response given to my question on notice during parliament leaves many residents up the flooded creek without a paddle."

—ENDS—

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¹ <https://www.qld.gov.au/housing/buying-owning-home/financial-help-concessions/resilient-homes-fund>

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Photo: State Member for Hinchinbrook and KAP Deputy Leader, Nick Dametto.

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