




Speech by

Jann Stuckey

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

Hansard Wednesday, 7 September 2011

QUEENSLAND-NEW SOUTH WALES, CROSS-BORDER MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (9.43 pm): As the local member representing a border electorate, last week I welcomed news of the signing of a new cross-border memorandum of understanding between the Queensland and New South Wales Premiers. An existing MOU, signed by former Premiers Peter Beattie and Morris Iemma back in 2007, has proved to be little more than a stunt for political point-scoring and media exposure. The people of Currumbin deserve better from the Queensland government. This new MOU has come about as a direct recommendation from the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry to improve disaster management and emergency response and will cover the whole border, not just our local region.

After years of Labor governments sitting side by side and neglecting local needs, the goodwill expressed by Liberal Premier Barry O'Farrell, with the announcement of a cross-border commissioner together with this new MOU, brings a renewed sense of cooperation to deliver tangible benefits. A meaningful MOU is long overdue, particularly for the adjoining communities of Coolangatta and the Tweed. It is positive to hear that the 2011 MOU will have a wider scope, expanding on the current health and transport provisions to include policing, social services, primary industries, water and emergency management and response.

For years now I have been calling for a proper cross-border audit to determine the true extent of the services and resources we have to work with. I therefore call on the Premier to release the details of this important agreement so that our communities can work towards implementing its goals. I ask the Premier to honour her commitment to meet with the New South Wales Premier annually and I implore her to include me, the local member, together with local services in discussions to progress cross-border issues. Stakeholders working within the community will have the best understanding of what is working and what areas need attention. It is to be hoped that the new arrangement will work proactively with our New South Wales neighbours to enhance our region and bring improved community services for those working and living in this unique environment.

Living in a community that straddles state borders presents unique cross-border challenges and all too often residents bear the brunt of buck-passing and finger-pointing as states deny responsibility for funding for key infrastructure and social services. The Tugun bypass—or 'impasse' as it was called for many years—was one such example as New South Wales refused to commit a single cent to its cost and Queensland had to foot the bill, which ended up in a massive cost blow-out due to the bumbling of the Queensland Labor government. When it comes to policing, in order to make arrests over the border our police must train to achieve 'special constable' status. Then there is the huge inconvenience of licensing and regulation variances that make life difficult for tradies and professionals who live and work in this region. Mental health and child safety services are also stretched to the limit. Cost-of-living spikes as a result of neglectful and wasteful Labor state governments have created a rise in the number of homeless people seeking shelter. I sincerely hope that this MOU will become a vehicle to resolve cross-border issues and improve service delivery in our region.