

Media Release

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Attention Chief of Staff / Property Editor

\$2 MILLION NORTH QUEENSLAND INSURANCE TASKFORCE WELCOMED BY THE STRATA INDUSTRY

TIME FOR TALK IS OVER: NO MORE TALKFESTS

The Federal Government is being called on to take every step possible to ensure a \$2million taskforce investigation into insurance issues in North Queensland doesn't end up as a multi-million dollar "debate".

The peak body for the strata industry in Queensland welcomes the announcement of the taskforce but says North Queenslanders can't afford any further strata insurance increases and the taskforce's job will be vital in deciding the North's future.

"On behalf of the strata community in North Queensland, we urge the Federal Government to put the right structure in place to get firm recommendations from this taskforce. No more talkfests please that don't lead anywhere constructive," Strata Community Australia (Qld) President, Simon Barnard, said today.

Split over six months, the key deliverables of the taskforce are an interim report after three months and a comprehensive report at the end of the term.

Member for Leichardt, Warren Entsch, has told media that the taskforce aims to identify two options for reduced insurance costs; a government run reinsurance pool and a community-owned Northern Australia mutual insurer (providing cyclone specific cover).

"It's critical the North sees some proactive evaluation that leads to actions as there has been many assessments without a real outcome for the residents in strata units," Mr Barnard said.

Some residents in the north have seen insurance premiums treble in recent years following cyclone damage to homes and buildings.

Strata Community Australia (Qld) says that whilst the forming of a taskforce is a positive to those affected, the Federal Government must make sure this process is action based and not just a talkfest.

"Hundreds of Queenslanders are still in limbo from damage caused by the cyclone season, so the completion of this taskforce needs to be given the

highest priority, otherwise it could be too late to achieve anything for those it was designed for," Mr Barnard said.

For cyclone Marcia alone, it is estimated over 1500 buildings and homes were damaged across the state leaving approximately 100 families homeless.

"North Queenslanders are relying on this taskforce to deliver, strong and common sense recommendations," Mr Barnard said.

According to the Bureau of Meteorology, on average 4.7 tropical cyclones per year affect the Queensland tropical region.

"The Cyclone season is all but over but those affected are a long way from seeing long term solutions, so we hope this taskforce can provide swift answers to the people of North Queensland."

ENDS