



**HON CRAIG EMERSON MP**

MINISTER FOR SMALL BUSINESS, INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS AND  
THE SERVICE ECONOMY  
MINISTER ASSISTING THE MINISTER FOR FINANCE ON  
DEREGULATION

**2GB Sydney**

Interview with Jason Morrison

WEDNESDAY, 11 February 2009

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**SUBJECTS:** *Queensland floods*

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MORRISON: One of the greatest things I've heard today has come from North Queensland. There's this owner in North Queensland whose shop and company have been inundated with water with the flooding in North Queensland. He's got a warehouse elsewhere that has been saved and wants to donate money that he is going to be able to make off the back of that so many people needing produce in the area can get back into shape, and he's going to donate money to the Victorian fire appeal.

Here's the township that's been overwhelmed with, it's just incredible I mean, but that is in a way, it's becoming slightly a forgotten natural disaster in this part of the country too. There is an enormous demand for assistance to our north. Fires in the south, floods to the north. You go to Cairns and you keep going north and the towns have been devastated with this. The Federal Government's a bit stretched with resources on it too because they've now had to split up the effort because floods are a very different thing entirely to bush fires, but the damage is just as significant and some regards, but nowhere near the loss of life and in fact, so far, very little at all, with the Queensland floods.

Craig Emerson who is a Federal Minister normally for Small Business is also a Queensland based Member of Parliament and he's up there coordinating the relief effort on this one. Yes stretched resources. Minister, good afternoon.

EMERSON: Good afternoon Jason.

MORRISON: Incredible this. I mean we've all been looking south. Look north and there is another natural disaster that isn't quite attracting the attention but the need is just as big.

EMERSON: Well 62 per cent of Queensland has been under water, but the news is better here than in Victoria. Not anything like the loss of life as you've mentioned and just in the time that I've been here, Jason, the floodwater has receded quite a lot. We're in Ingham. There's a town 17K north of Ingham; a little place called Halifax and just yesterday we went out there and couldn't get in. Today the road's clear. Two days ago you couldn't get into Ingham without a boat so things are moving pretty quickly, the water is moving down, it's receding.

The services and support are flowing well I think. The Commonwealth, state and the local councils are working pretty well together. I just pick up on your point about the spirit of Australia, again at the centre where people can get financial assistance and other people have said that they are going to donate some or all of the assistance that they can get to the Victorian bushfire victims.

MORRISON: That's incredible.

EMERSON: Great country, great people.

MORRISON: Yeah, my word and I love the attitude of the North Queenslanders; 'oh it floods up here, we're used to it'.

EMERSON: That's amazing. You know we went as I said to Halifax and there are people mowing their lawns.

MORRISON: (laughs).

EMERSON: After two weeks of basically being under water and once the sun comes out they're like 'oh I better mow the lawns'. You know they're right next to, absolutely right next to, fields and fields of sugar cane.

MORRISON: Yeah.

EMERSON: There are snakes in the sugar cane. I suppose that would be one of the reasons that they're doing this but they are trying to spruce their houses up, clean the houses up as much as they can. They have had a setback before where they went in and cleaned the houses up and then the heavens broke again, the rivers rose and they got inundated. So yeah they're tough as teak up here and that's exciting but it looks like the worst of it is over.

MORRISON: That's good to hear.

EMERSON: There's a lot of mopping up to do.

MORRISON: Good to hear, thanks for coming on the program.

EMERSON: Ok.

MORRISON: Craig Emerson who's the Federal Minister, who's been given the job of coordinating that relief effort to our north. Yes 62% of the state under water, and it has been, although retreating now, it's still there in Queensland. 5:30 is the time, 2GB.

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