



Speech by

Hon. Warren Pitt

MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

North Queensland Floods, Roads Infrastructure

Hon. FW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads and Local Government) (10.03 am): Members are well aware that many parts of northern Queensland have been enduring some of the worst floods in a generation. While floods and extreme weather events are part of life in the tropics, particularly during the annual wet season, many people in the north and north-west are suffering more than usual this year. The towns of Normanton and Karumba remain cut off, with essential food supplies being flown in to the gulf communities. Ingham is slowly recovering after weeks of torrential rain and rain has moved south, cutting off even more communities in the central and central west. Heavy rainfall has been an ongoing feature of life in the north in recent weeks, and at this stage the extent of flood damage on the road network is not fully known.

Main Roads priority at the moment is to reopen access to communities as quickly as possible. Preliminary estimates of the road damage exceed \$65 million. This staggering figure will be revised once waters have actually receded and more detailed inspections can be carried out. As rains ease, roads will be reopened progressively. Unfortunately at the moment, dozens of state controlled roads across Queensland are cut by floodwaters. Without doubt, Main Roads crews will have a big job on their hands to assess damage and repair the state controlled road network. In the meantime, I urge motorists to be aware of the conditions and drive to the changed circumstances. Floodwaters can rise quickly and unexpectedly, and some roads may be completely inundated or washed away.

Main Roads constantly reviews the changing road conditions, installing road closure signs where necessary and providing media outlets and the department's web site with regular reports and updates. It is working with local governments, emergency services and other stakeholders to restore access to communities affected by flooding, with priority given to the most urgent incidents. It may take some time before certain roads can be safely accessed, so I want to thank communities for their continued patience. Our aim is to minimise community disruption and maintain road access to essential services throughout the north.