

QUESTION ON NOTICE
No. 772
Asked on Tuesday, 23 May 2006

MRS SULLIVAN asked the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries (MR MULHERIN)-

QUESTION:

Will he provide information on the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries Business Information Centre and how it assisted in the department's response in the aftermath of Cyclone Larry?

ANSWER:

The DPI&F Call Centre was established on 7 July 1997 and provides the public throughout Queensland with a single point of telephone and web email access to information about primary industries in Queensland.

Information gathered is rich in data which results in reports that allow DPI&F business groups to identify areas of need and possible industry trends.

To better reflect the service provided by the Call Centre to the business groups, it has been renamed the 'DPI&F Business Information Centre'.

The Business Information Centre supports the individual business groups as an extension of their business.

The Business Information Centre is an information and referral service that also undertakes outbound surveys for DPI&F business groups.

Operators handle a variety of inward calls including emergency animal and plant pest incursions, such as the Red Imported Fire Ant, Citrus Canker, etc.

The Business Information Centre has recorded over 1 million inbound calls in its 9 years of operation. It has recorded over 120,000 inbound calls relating to the Red Imported Fire Ant pest incursion.

The Business Information Centre was a key communications group in response to the Cyclone Larry emergency and was promoted as the point of contact for the public to cover all immediate needs.

Hours were immediately extended from 8:00am – 6:00pm 5 days a week to 8:00am – 8:00pm 7 days a week, to guarantee people affected by this disaster were informed of the latest developments.

The Business Information Centre is working closely with the Primary Industries Cyclone Recovery Advisory Service (PICRAS) personnel, to provide information on issues relating to crop recovery, biosecurity, farm financial counseling, fisheries and aquaculture advice, administration support, industry liaison and issues relating to the clean-up operation.

The Business Information Centre enabled swift access to financial assistance by connecting affected landholders direct to Centrelink and QRAA.

Daily reports were provided by the Business Information Centre to the Cyclone Larry Operations Group.

The Business Information Centre was also the point of contact for "Operation Farm Clear" (OFC) as part of the Cyclone Larry tidy up.

A database was developed by the Business Information Centre to ensure all affected properties were captured and prioritised. A series of 20 questions were compiled to identify lot and plan number (for mapping purposes), extent of damage, available machinery and what was needed to clear the debris.

The Business Information Centre continues to gather all details of affected properties for OFC to action to ensure all primary producers are functioning normally as soon as possible.

So far, 580 calls have been received by the Business Information Centre in regard to Cyclone Larry, and 175 calls relating to Operation Farm Clear.