

Question on Notice
No. 298
Asked on Tuesday 11 March 2008

MS JARRATT asked the Minister for Main Roads and Local Government (MR PITT)-

QUESTION:

Following high rainfall and flood events in northern areas, including the Mackay and Whitsunday Electorates-

- (1) What assistance is available to repair road infrastructure?
- (2) How quickly will councils be able to access the necessary funding?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Whitsunday for the question.

- (1) During the recent flood events in the Mackay and Whitsunday region, Main Roads' resources were directed towards repair of emergency flood damage. As a result, all project work was suspended and every effort was put into the emergency works. At the beginning of the crisis, Main Roads was only able to fix immediate problems, such as clearing roads and erecting safety signage. As the rain decreased, the focus changed to carrying out more substantial maintenance repairs on the road asset.

Main Roads worked closely with local councils to share resources, prioritise repair works and carry out road inspections.

Main Roads have now completed the majority of flood damage repair works on the State network.

Main Roads and council officers are currently completing road inspections and preparing submissions for funding required to repair roads which were damaged. Once submissions are finalised and processed, payments will then be made to councils and Main Roads for the costs incurred in the repair works.

- (2) The prime mechanism utilised by the Queensland Government for providing financial assistance to communities affected by natural disaster events is the Australian/State Government Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA).

These arrangements provide a cost sharing formula (between the Queensland and Australian Governments) as well as a range of pre-agreed relief/assistance measures that may be activated by the Queensland Government immediately once a need has been established.

The Department of Local Government, Sport and Recreation (DLGSR) administers that component of the NDRRA which provides funding assistance to local governments to restore damage incurred to non-insured essential public assets (such as roads) as a result of an activated natural disaster event to the equivalent of their pre-disaster standard and condition.

As a result of a tropical low which caused monsoonal rain and severe flooding in Northern Queensland during January/February 2008, the Mackay Regional Council and the Whitsunday Regional Council incurred damage to their essential public assets and have been requested to submit applications providing details of estimated restoration costs resulting from this natural disaster event. The councils have three months to respond to this request.

All council contact officers have been contacted by DLGSR and made aware of the administrative procedures in place to apply for grant assistance under the NDRRA.

NDRRA applications for restoration works and claims for emergency works and immediate post disaster repairs will be assessed as a priority upon receipt from the local governments.

Once a council application has been assessed by DLGSR and, where necessary, by the Department of Main Roads, Mackay District Office, NDRRA grant assistance will be approved as a priority.

The councils are encouraged to begin restoration works ahead of receiving NDRRA grant approval and may apply for a 20% advance ahead of works once grant assistance has been approved.