

Question on Notice
No. 1720
Asked on 10 November 2009

MR WETTENHALL asked the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health (MR LUCAS)-

QUESTION:

Will the Minister inform the House of services available in Queensland for victims of serious or catastrophic road trauma, and their families and carers?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for Barron River for his question.

The State Government endorsed and funded a strategic plan specifically for the clinical management of serious and catastrophic trauma in 2007 – ‘A Trauma Plan for Queensland’.

Major Trauma Services have since been established at Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH), Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital (RBWH) and The Townsville Hospital for adult trauma, and Royal Children’s Hospital for paediatric trauma, which host highly specialised units to manage severely injured patients.

Road and air retrieval systems are in place to take severely injured trauma patients from the accident site to the most appropriate hospital facility, which could include regional or rural hospitals.

Formal bypass protocols for these retrievals will shortly be implemented to enhance the process of optimal trauma care.

The injuries and general condition of the patient are assessed by the receiving hospital and secondary transfers to one of the tertiary hospitals, especially where there are complex spinal injuries (PAH) or burns (RBWH), are undertaken if necessary. When a patient presents to the hospital, the human social support needs for that patient (including families and carers) are assessed and co-ordinated through the psycho-social network.

In the case of disasters, the Queensland Health Disaster Plan (including emergency management arrangements) prescribes how the whole of health services capability is activated and coordinated to provide effective and efficient clinical, human-social support and on-going Primary Health Care Service, linked to the State Disaster Coordination Centre. Each Health Service District has a plan in place which activates these arrangements, including the necessary linkages between partners throughout the health sector and the Queensland Disaster District Management arrangements (including Disaster District Recovery Committees).

In the Member’s region, Cairns Base Hospital is a regional hospital with the capacity to deal with a range of acute trauma cases. Currently, Cairns Base Hospital can treat presenting trauma patients with general and orthopaedic surgery supported by high level anaesthetic and intensive care services. Acute trauma care is supported by ancillary diagnostic and support services that includes diagnostic imaging (with CT and MRI), pathology, and pharmacy. However, clinical assessment of the patient at presentation will dictate whether medical retrieval and transfer to a major Trauma Service for definitive treatment is required.