

Question on Notice
No. 2031
Asked on 7 October 2010

MS NELSON-CARR asked the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services (MR ROBERTS) -

QUESTION:

Will the Minister inform the House of the programs designed to ensure that Queensland residents are aptly prepared for this coming storm season?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for her question. I know the Member and her Townsville region colleagues are passionate about this issue and protecting Queenslanders and their property.

The Bligh Government is committed to ensuring that government agencies, local governments and the community are well prepared to respond and recover from the impacts of storm, floods and cyclones.

On 21 September 2010, NRMA Insurance and Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ) launched the awareness campaign for the forthcoming 2010-2011 Storm Season. The campaign encourages people to take a community approach to their storm season planning by lending a helping hand in their neighbourhoods when preparing for, and responding to, a storm event.

EMQ provides a range of practical information on how to prepare for severe storms and other natural disaster events. The information and resources are based around the following key messages for the season:

- Prepare your household emergency plan;
- Prepare your household emergency kit ;
- Prepare your household for evacuation;
- Prepare your home;
- Tune into warnings; and
- Know your neighbours.

EMQ provides a range of on-line resources for local governments to provide links via their websites, including:

- Webpages and downloadable fact sheets on key steps to prepare for cyclone, storm and flood in English and 12 other languages; and
- Steps you can take toward preparing pets for disasters.

The Department of Community Safety (DCS) has developed a range of "Tune into Warnings", material which encourages members of the community to be alert to emergency warning information by tuning into their local ABC radio station, logging onto the Bureau of Meteorology website, listening out for Emergency Alert messages that are sent to their telephones, and to act immediately on the messages that are provided.

On 21 September 2010, I was pleased to launch the new “State Emergency Service Get Ready Guide” – a comprehensive booklet outlining the steps for household preparedness, safety tips for cyclone, storm, flood and tsunami and contact and emergency planning templates. The user-friendly guide is designed to hang on the fridge door and includes templates for preparing evacuation plans and kits as well as identifying key contact numbers for use during emergencies.

The DCS has partnered with five councils to install ten highway billboards encouraging coastal communities to prepare for the cyclone season. An advertising campaign for the SES 132500 telephone number is currently underway and includes advertisements on ABC radio, information on the Get Ready Guide and NMRA Insurance radio and television advertisements, which are scheduled to commence on 1 November 2010.

The DCS has also been actively engaged with local government, the Queensland Police Service and other parties and conducted Exercise Poseidon between 8 June and 10 June 2010 in the Far North Region which focussed on developing skills to manage disasters at a disaster district local government level.

Through the ClimateQ Strategy, EMQ was provided \$3.37 million to enhance the storage of equipment and improve its ability to respond to natural disasters.

EMQ also recently purchased a Disaster Warehouse at Ormeau to service South East Queensland. It will be stocked with appropriate equipment in readiness for storm season. Another warehouse is to be established in Townsville in 2010-2011. To support disaster preparedness, the DCS maintains caches of disaster stores including sandbags, tarpaulins, ladders, chainsaws, and generators at Brendale, Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton, Beenleigh and Maryborough.

The Queensland Tropical Cyclone Consultative Committee, jointly chaired by Emergency Management Queensland and the Bureau of Meteorology, conducted ten workshops across Queensland in October 2010 to enhance community preparedness for the cyclone, storm and flood season. Workshops were conducted in Charleville, St George, Mackay, Beenleigh, Gladstone, Rockhampton, Innisfail, Charters Towers, Gympie and Kowanyama. While these were focussed on local governments, they contain the latest information that can be of assistance to communities.

EMQ will continue the National Indigenous Radio Service campaign and broadcast culturally relevant community safety messages on cyclone, storm and flash flood to the State’s Indigenous communities. The Department has also appointed Four Indigenous Field Officers to work with Indigenous Councils in Far North Queensland to assist those Councils to develop their disaster management plans which will assist their local communities.

EMQ has also led the \$4.56 million “Protecting Our Coastal Communities” program to acquire high resolution elevation data over coastal communities to help identify areas susceptible to storm-tide inundation. This data will enable local governments and disaster planners in all agencies to more accurately plan for evacuations.

The Bligh Government is committed to helping Queensland communities prepare for and reduce the impact of natural disasters.