

Question on Notice

No. 34

Asked on 16 February 2011

MS NELSON-CARR asked the Minister for Main Roads (MR WALLACE) -

QUESTION:

With reference to Cyclone Yasi which recently devastated much of North Queensland and in the knowledge that the Minister for Main Roads was there and saw the disaster first hand—
What is the Main Roads portfolio doing to get Queensland connected again as soon as possible?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Mundingburra for the question. The Honourable Member is a strong supporter of roads and road issues in North Queensland and she has a keen interest in the recovery effort for local roads.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads is playing a vital role in reconnecting Queenslanders affected by both Cyclone Yasi and the recent floods.

I am particularly proud of my department's response to the devastation caused by Cyclone Yasi. Our 29 RoadTek work crews, 18 regional offices and key divisions mobilised immediately after the cyclone, and many staff continue to work outside normal hours on priority works, including construction and maintenance works, traffic control, line marking, pavement testing, and plant hire services.

To keep people up to date with traffic and travel information in the wake of the cyclone, the department used a number of key government tools, including the 131940 phone line and website. On 10 Feb 2011 there were 78 480 visits to the website and over 776 000 page views. In addition, we launched a dedicated freight hotline 1 300 105 647, which has received more than 600 calls over the past fortnight, and the freight hotline team has also handled a further 300 enquiries by email.

Cyclone Yasi has left behind a great deal of damage to our state controlled road network including:

- Far North Region 1466km of road network experienced damage
- Northern Region 1600km of road network experienced damage
- Fitzroy region 843km of road network experienced damage

The full extent of damage to over 8000 kilometres of the network might not be known for many months, and it will be an unprecedented long-term repair job. Our temporary repairs to the transport network across Queensland will finish within two months and will be in place for six to 12 months while we work on a full restoration program.

A Recovery Unit has been established in the department to coordinate a state-wide response to flooding and damage from Cyclone Yasi. The unit is supported by a Road Recovery Access Group which was established to accelerate resupply throughout Queensland and enable economic recovery in regional communities. Membership is from Queensland Police, industry and key departmental staff.

My department is undertaking a three-phase, multi-modal approach – incident response, recovery and restoration. We are throwing all our resources behind the recovery and our crews and staff are working around the clock to get the job done. The skills we have deployed include engineers (civil, electrical, and structural), geo-technologists, surveyors, bridge and transport inspectors, construction workers, project managers and pavement testers.

We're already well ahead in planning for the restoration phase. We have in place a state-wide work program to restore Queensland's transport network to current engineering standards. We will continue to work with the community, local government, other government agencies and industry on full restoration of the transport network. I will be actively seeking funding from the federal government for restoration works, particularly through the National Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements, a joint federal / state government initiative designed to provide funding to restore essential public assets damaged by flooding.