

Question on Notice
No. 367
Asked on 23 March 2011

MR STEVENS ASKED THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM, MANUFACTURING AND SMALL BUSINESS (MS JARRATT) —

QUESTION:

With reference to the five island resorts in the Whitsunday region that remain closed due to the devastating natural disasters—

Will the Minister outline what assistance the department has offered to these resorts in their efforts to become fully operational as soon as possible?

ANSWER:

I am advised that a number of the island resorts that had temporarily closed in the wake of Tropical Cyclone Yasi have since re-opened. This leaves two still closed for refurbishments and repairs, and one other resort whose management had taken the decision to close permanently, unrelated to the recent natural disasters.

In situations where businesses close and workers are retrenched, the Bligh Government through the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI), in collaboration with other Government departments and Australian Government agencies, provides the Rapid Response Team (RRT) initiative. This initiative provides support to retrenched workers and assists them in the transition to new employment.

DEEDI takes a lead role in helping displaced employees to quickly get back into the workforce. As notice of retrenchments or business closures are reported, the department will monitor the situation and contact the employer to offer RRT support, which includes information on Australian Government, Queensland Government, community and commercial services that may be of assistance.

The closures of three Island Resorts were identified by the department as potentially requiring an RRT response and support was considered for these resorts. However, in two cases it was not fully activated because the employer indicated that they were retaining their employees by transferring them to other resorts within the company or through other alternative arrangements. In the case of the third resort, RRT information was provided to the employer and affected staff were advised to contact the RRT officers and the Cannonvale Centrelink office for information on financial assistance and income support.