

Question on Notice
No. 97
Asked on 17 February 2011

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

QUESTION:

As the emotional toll on people who were impacted by floods or Cyclone Yasi will, for some, be very hard to cope with as they try to re-build their lives—

What is the State Government doing to assist people who may need some help at this time?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for Springwood for her question.

The Queensland Government in these difficult times has, along with key partners like Lifeline, responded to provide human social support to those people affected. This Government knows those affected by the floods and cyclones may develop emotional and behavioural difficulties. These reactions can, in some cases, occur shortly after the event while in others, they occur many months afterwards.

Staff from Queensland Health human social response teams have been, and continue to be, available to those communities in need across Queensland. More than 875 staff were made available for a coordinated human social recovery effort from Queensland Health. These trained professionals have had more than 8,900 health contacts via evacuation and recovery centres.

The Queensland Government recognises the needs for long term human social support to those communities in need and in response are developing a Queensland Mental Health Natural Disaster Recovery Plan. This Government recognises that communities and individuals require different levels and types of social and emotional support and interventions following a natural disaster to return to their normal level of functioning.

The development of the mental health recovery plan is being led by Queensland Health in consultation with expert advisors, including Associate Professor Brett McDermott and Emeritus Professor Beverley Raphael, who are world-leaders in mental health disaster and trauma recovery. The 2010 Australian of the Year, Professor Pat McGorry, visited Queensland between 19-24 January 2011 to support those affected by the floods and provide advice to the Queensland Government about mental health aspects of the floods. The Recovery Plan is part of the broader Human Social Plan that seeks to support the community which plays an integral role in recovery and enhancement of resilience and renewal.

The Queensland Government will, as communities rebuild their lives, facilitate the provision of mental health care for Queenslanders affected by the flood and severe weather crisis.