

Question on Notice
No. 144
Asked on 26 February 2019

Mr J Costigan asked Premier and Minister for Trade (Hon. A Palaszczuk)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the damage from Cyclone Debbie almost two years ago—

Will the Premier advise when the people of the Whitsundays will see genuine ‘Cyclone Recovery’ from the Palaszczuk Labor Government, for example the reopening of the Proserpine Entertainment Centre and improved roads, most notably Shute Harbour Road at flood-prone Hamilton Plains?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government has fought hard to provide the Whitsundays with every single cent of available assistance to speed up recovery from Severe Tropical Cyclone Debbie.

To date, the Queensland Government has paid Whitsunday Regional Council more than \$46 million for the restoration of essential public assets such as roads, bridges, culverts and floodways under the joint Commonwealth/State Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA).

My Government secured \$15.2 million under Category D of the NDRRA for the restoration of Shute Harbour Marina and \$1.85 million to raise the height of the seawall. When preliminary works revealed the enormous scale of damage to Shute Harbour, the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) secured from the Australian Government an extension of time until 30 June 2020 for the project.

We also secured \$9.5 million under Category D for the restoration of Airlie Beach, recreational assets and the environmental recovery of coastal regions within the Whitsundays.

But I know it will take more than that to help the Whitsundays recover.

That is why the government committed a further \$11.8 million in 100 per cent state funds for recovery projects in the Whitsundays, including:

- \$5 million for repairs to the Whitsunday Regional Council Administration Building and Community Resilience Hub in Proserpine;
- \$5.487 million for repairs to Airlie Beach;
- \$895,000 for repairs to Bowen Front Beach; and
- \$500,000 for the Proserpine Entertainment Centre.

Subsequent initial works at the Entertainment Centre revealed repairs were out of the question as there were historic, systemic issues with the building and it will be cheaper to knock it down and start again. Whitsunday Regional Council (the council) has advised the project is now expected to cost \$10.7 million

I was pleased to announce in Parliament today, on the second anniversary of Cyclone Debbie, the Queensland Government is going one better and will provide \$5.7million for a new Entertainment Centre for the people of Proserpine. This \$5.7 million includes the

\$500,000 I announced in May 2018 during the Governing From the Regions event in the Whitsundays.

Though my Government has provided financial assistance for cyclone recovery in the region, it's important to acknowledge that the Queensland Government is not the delivery agent for these recovery projects.

The procurement, scheduling and delivery of works in the Whitsundays is a matter for the Whitsunday Regional Council (the council).

Under the NDRRA, the council has until 30 June 2019 to complete recovery works, except where they have an approved extension to the allowable time limit, such as with Shute Harbour.

QRA has approved \$80,000 in repairs for Shute Harbour Road, for the damage sustained from Severe Tropical Cyclone Debbie.

The Australian Government's rules around NDRRA and the new Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA), which applies to all disasters occurring after 1 November 2018, mean that only 'like for like' replacements are eligible.

That's why the Queensland Government has established the \$38 million Queensland Disaster Resilience Fund (QDRF).

The QDRF is 100 per cent state funded and will specifically target projects and initiatives that enhance disaster resilience.

The first \$9.5 million round is now open for applications and I encourage the council to apply to the QRA should the council determine the Shute Harbour Road needs further financial assistance to help with recovery.

As anyone who experienced Severe Tropical Cyclone Debbie would know, the destruction it caused takes time to fix and recovery can't happen overnight.