



Wiluna dealing with Flood Disaster and Damaged Roads

Speaking on ABC Radio, Wiluna Shire President Jim Quadrio has called on the state government to declare a natural disaster in the Shire due to damage caused by heavy rains in the east of the district in the wake of Ex-Tropical Cyclone Blake.

Cr Quadrio claimed that drought-ravaged Granite Peak Station had received approximately 150mm of rain in about 15 hours over the 9th & 10th of January, compared to 105mm over the preceding 23 months.

Carnegie Station is reported to have recorded the wettest 24-hour total since records began in 1942 of 270mm, which according to the Bureau of Meteorology is close to a 1-in-1000 year rainfall event.

Although this is very good for the pastoralists in the area who have been badly affected by one of the worst droughts on record, it has left many stations isolated and has caused very severe damage to the Shire's roads.

The Shire is contacting pastoral stations in the area to collect data on the number of people trapped on stations by floodwaters, and the adequacy of their supplies of food, fuel and medicines. This information is being reported to the Department of Fire and Emergency Services so that supply drops can be arranged.

The much larger and longer task will be assessing and repairing the roads in the Shire. The Shire of Wiluna is responsible for maintenance of 1,832 kms of unsealed roads, most of which are currently impassable.

The roads that have so far been inspected are showing very severe damage, but it will take some time to assess all the roads, document the damage, and prepare detailed cost estimates.

Storms in January and February 2017 caused more than \$10M worth of damage to the Shire's roads, and it took until June 2019 to complete the repairs. The amount of rainfall received earlier this month has been greater than in those 2017 storm events and it is expected that the damage may be both more severe and more extensive.

"From a Shire perspective, potentially there is probably 600 kms of road that could have been affected and from our turn-off going to Glen Ayle – in just the first 40 kms that we have been able to get across, there was damage probably worth millions of dollars," Cr Quadrio said.

Roads are important economic infrastructure for the pastoral industry, for the mining industry, and for tourism. So the Shire is keen to have the natural disaster declared as soon as possible so that it can advance the process of having repair works approved for funding.

The Shire made an initial submission back on 13th January but is still awaiting an official disaster declaration.

M
E
D
I
A

R
E
L
E
A
S
E



