

Question on Notice
No. 874
Asked on 29 November 2012

MR WELLINGTON asked the Premier (MR NEWMAN)—

With reference to the flooding that occurred last year in Ashgrove Drive, Cooroy, as a result of blockages in the Cooroy and Six Mile Creeks—

Will the government investigate ways of clearing fallen timber out of both creeks to free the flow of water and reduce possible flooding in the town and residential area of Cooroy?

ANSWER:

In most cases, local councils and private landholders are able to clear debris without approval from the government. However, the Queensland Government has held an important role in securing and distributing funding to support these on-ground activities.

Approval under the riverine protection provisions of the *Water Act 2000* (the Act) would be required if the removal of the debris also included excavation of material such as silt or sand from the watercourse channel. However, landholders and entities, such as local councils, are authorised to undertake such work in accordance with relevant guidelines for activities in a watercourse, lake or spring. Importantly, this enables independent work to be carried out in watercourses with appropriate planning and record keeping.

The guidelines can be found on the website of the Department of Natural Resources and Mines.

It should be noted that approval by means of a riverine protection permit under the Act would be required for activities outside of the scope of the guidelines.

Previously, the Queensland Government was successful in securing \$8.414 million of funding for the 2010-11 natural disasters funding assistance from the Commonwealth Government under the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA). This was under the Environmental Line of Recovery for acute riparian, flood plain, coastal and farm clean-up works. The Department of Natural Resources and Mines has been disseminating this funding on behalf of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) in line with NDRRA requirements.

At that time, regional natural resource management bodies were able to quickly scope urgent environmental recovery works in consultation with local communities and to respond to environmental damage caused to local creeks and rivers and, where relevant, protect previous investment made by the Queensland Government, such as riparian fencing. An application was sought from South East Queensland Catchments, the regional body responsible for the region in which the residential area of Cooroy is located. Unfortunately, works scoped under this funding were not considered a priority by the QRA for the Cooroy area at that time. However, I am confident that council and landholders are still able to readily clear debris from these waterways within scope of the Act.