

THE TORRES STRAIT LOCAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT GROUP



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MEDIA STATEMENT

26/3/18

The Torres Strait Local Disaster Management Group (TSLDMG) was actively involved over the weekend in responding to the threat of Tropical Cyclone Nora.

The TSLDMG was in a Lean Forward Activation Status, meaning that the group members were coordinating with the Torres Strait Local Community Disaster Groups to make all practical and possible measures to respond to this threat.

The Torres Strait Region and communities are particularly vulnerable to these weather events due to impacts on transport and supplies, essential services, and from tidal inundation of low lying communities.

Impacts of the cyclone included tidal storm surges, strong to gale force winds, heavy rain, and an isolated power outage at Kubin for which Council supplied emergency fuel to keep the store operating.

The Torres Strait Local Disaster Management Group went from lean forward to “stand down” Sunday afternoon, as the threat had passed.

Torres Strait Island Regional Council

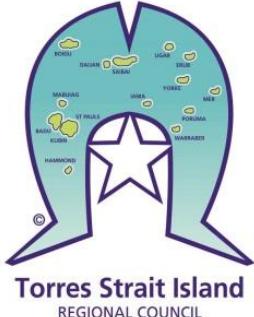
Due to these impacts and the uncertainty around where cyclones would track, the following types of actions are occurring in the Torres Strait Island Regional Council area:

- Warning advice provided via various communication channels from Facebook to door knocking.
- Tying down of items and location of machinery to better protected areas.
- Sandbagging of vulnerable assets and housing.
- Working with other services providers to provide fuel and other resources.
- Providing the option of temporary accommodation to residents, including those recently impacted at Iama Island in January from coastal inundation and storms.
- Sand bagging around residences on Yam which are at threat from tidal inundation.

Mayor Gela of the Torres Strait Island Regional Council (TSIRC) stated that:

“We greatly acknowledge the work the TSLDMG have done in response to the impacts we have experienced, and in tracking the continued threat through the weekend. I also acknowledge the work the Far North District Disaster Management Group is doing in providing a regional approach to information and offers of assistance. I am particularly impressed with how at the Community Level the Disaster Groups have pulled together, albeit with limited resources and whilst being effectively isolated on their communities, to combat the significant storm and tidal impacts being felt across much of the Torres Strait.”

“TSIRC Communities are at the ‘coal face’ of climate change impacts, and these severe weather events greatly exacerbate the threats to already vulnerable communities.”



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"My thoughts and prayers are with those further South who were near or directly impacted by the eye of the Cyclone, and as part of the District Group we offer whatever assistance we can at this time and during the recovery stage."

Torres Shire Council

The Torres Shire Council ensured all residents were fully informed of the impending cyclone. Council also kept key businesses and agencies including the ferry companies, the port authority and aged care up to date with the weather situation. Regular updates to Council's Facebook page and notices distributed around the community noticeboards helped to prepare the community for this severe weather event.

Torres Shire Council's staff made preparations in the days prior to the weather deteriorating to ensure sewer and water services would continue to operate during a power outage and stormwater drains were clear. Council had a team of staff with plant and machinery on standby to respond to calls for assistance from residents and any damage caused by flying debris and fallen trees.

Mayor Malone said:

"Over the past days the TSLDMG have worked well with relevant agencies and NGO's to assist with communities in preparedness for predicted weather stemming from Cyclone Nora. Extensive communications means have been regularly used including door knocking in smaller communities to ensure sufficient messaging and awareness is provided to community members."

"We encouraged community members particularly in high risk areas to take appropriate actions to ensure the safety of one self and respective family members and for everyone to remain vigilant and listen out for further weather updates."

END

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