

CYCLONE GLENDA

**75. Mr S.R. HILL to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:**

- (1) Will the minister advise the house of the current location of tropical cyclone Glenda and what preparation and strategies the Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia has undertaken to address the situation?
- (2) Will the minister also advise what support the communities located in these areas are receiving?

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Some members in this place may not be interested in the answer, but I am. It happens to affect my electorate. I would appreciate the minister's answer.

**Mr J.B. D'ORAZIO replied:**

- (1)-(2) This is a very important issue. Some people in our community are facing hardship this afternoon, and we should all remember that. Tropical cyclone Glenda is currently a category 4 cyclone. It is expected to cross the coast somewhere between Karratha and Onslow early this evening. It has very destructive winds of up to 250 kilometres an hour near its centre. Winds up to 130 kilometres an hour are already being experienced in the vicinity of Karratha. Residents in the low-lying areas of Roebourne, Karratha and Onslow have already been advised to move to higher ground at pre-established locations because of the expected storm surge. I was advised this morning that storm surges could be up to nine metres. These warnings commenced early on Wednesday evening. The Pilbara and the mid-west coast region are also planning for widespread rain and likely flood events. I remind people that those areas have experienced such conditions in their recent history. It is also expected that flooding could be experienced in the Kimberley, the Pilbara, the mid-west and the goldfields. Arrangements are in place to use whatever facilities are necessary. Aircraft have been put on standby.

No formal request for assistance has been made at this stage, but most recovery agencies are on standby. Local governments, relevant agencies and FESA have been working closely together to ensure local recovery arrangements are in place. The recovery arrangements can be escalated whenever they need to be. A 15-person incident management team and two storm strike teams are on standby. Incident management teams can help make sure that recovery procedures are being conducted correctly, such as ensuring that people are accounted for. Storm-damage strike teams will bring with them the equipment needed to assist in recovery, such as ropes, tarpaulins, rescue equipment and chainsaws. Tropical cyclone Glenda is being declared an eligible event under the Western Australian natural disaster relief arrangements. This provides for access to a range of assistance measures. Defence assistance to the civil community, category 2, has been enacted through the initiative of Emergency Management Australia, and both the Department of Defence and EMA this morning attended the state emergency coordination group meeting. This is only a pre-positioning of resources at this stage. If they are required, they will be activated. An operational area management group has been established in Port Hedland with planning teams active in Port Hedland, Karratha, Roebourne, Pannawonica, Tom Price, Onslow and Coral Bay. All emergency services personnel are preparing to go to communities or are on standby. As I said, a state emergency coordination group has been established, and it is working with all the agencies. There are 200 State Emergency Service volunteers. All government agencies are on standby and working with the communities. It will be a difficult afternoon for a number of people in the communities on that coast. We should all remember them in our prayers because it will be a very difficult time. Tropical cyclone Glenda is the worst storm this season and will create a huge problem for a great number of communities. Members should be aware of the danger facing some of our citizens this afternoon.