

KIMBERLEY FLOODS — TRANSPORT LINKS

21. Hon NEIL THOMSON to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Transport:

As at 14 February, it is 43 days since the bridge over the Martuwarra—Fitzroy River collapsed and I seek clarification of the ministers' statements in the media about heavy vehicle movements across the river.

- (1) Why has the minister only contracted barges with a maximum capacity of one light vehicle at a time and another for foot traffic?
- (2) When will the minister issue a contract to install a barge to enable heavy vehicles to traverse the river?
- (3) On what date will heavy vehicles be able to traverse the river on a barge?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. Before I provide the answer, I thank all those workers, including in Main Roads and across the board in government, and volunteers and all the agencies who have been working so hard so that those affected by the extraordinary flooding in the Kimberley can resume a normal-as-possible life.

- (1)–(3) Three punt barges capable of taking light vehicles and groups of people have arrived in Fitzroy Crossing and are now being trialled. Works on the barge landing areas and access tracks is continuing, but conditions on the ground are very challenging, with recent rainfall causing the river level to rise once again. Once these barges are operational and if river conditions permit, we will look at scaling up capacity.