

TRANSPORTER NEWS BRIEF



Shaping the outcome before reacting to operational issues

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SPECIAL EDITION

QUEENSLAND'S FLOOD DISASTER RECOVERY

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ONE-STOP SHOP FOR ROAD FREIGHT RECOVERY

Members have been previously advised that the Association's CEO, Peter Garske, has been appointed to the Roads and Transport Infrastructure Flood Recovery Committee.

A significant development has been the creation of a Permit Co-Ordination Group to consider and make efficient response to requests by operators and or our customers to operate under permit outside of the existing Regulatory framework to achieve and respond to the resupply and flood recovery process. Each application will be considered on its merit.

The group will consist of key personnel from Transport and Main Roads and Queensland Police and will include a nominee of the Queensland Trucking Association Ltd. The group will consider applications on a daily basis and is reporting to the General Manager, Flood Recovery and the Associate Director General.

QTA Ltd has nominated an individual who has wide practical experience across the States many freight routes and the many facets of the freight task. He has been a driver, an owner driver and currently works in a managerial role in a large family owned road freight/trucking business. He will represent QTA Ltd, its members and the industry, not the company by whom he is employed. It is anticipated that his commitment will be some 12 to 15 hours per week for several weeks.

All applications for special permit consideration can be made by phoning the new Hotline 1300 105 647 or by email floodrecovery_roadaccess@tmr.qld.gov.au. Already some 20 odd applications have been dealt with and permitted as exceptional circumstance.

Examples of Permit outcomes have been:

- Special access arrangements for livestock vehicles to support the reopening of the Grantham Meatworks;
- Flexibility in fatigue/driving hour arrangements for heavy vehicles involved in the waste collection associated with the flood clean up;
- Access to heavy vehicles via alternative routes not normally available to heavy vehicles;
- Excess weight and dimension;
- Vehicle combinations including convoy control.

Priority considerations in accessing the merit of applications will include:

- use of national highways, state controlled roads and local authority roads as re-supply links;
- the re-establishment of local economies;
- the needs of significant industries e.g. agriculture, mining.

Where special Permit is provided conditions may attach e.g. speed limit, to preserve road asset and maintain safety outcomes.

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PLATINUM PARTNERS**Media Release by Queensland Minister for Main Roads, The Honourable Craig Wallace MP**

A new dedicated one-stop shop will begin operating today to help keep Queensland's road freight moving.

Main Roads Minister Craig Wallace said a dedicated hotline would provide help and information to freight operators and primary producers trying to move goods around flooded or damaged roads.

"This is about getting Queensland moving again," Mr Wallace said.

"The hotline will enable freight operators to access specific information on alternative routes they can use, load limits, applying for heavy vehicle permits that cannot be provided through normal processes in affected regions, and special access in cases of emergency or great need.

"Reopening key transport routes and keeping freight moving is vital for our economic recovery and it has been a priority for us during this flood crisis.

"Our expert engineers and road crews have been working around the clock to assess, repair and reopen roads, and more than 70 per cent of the roads cut to date have now reopened."

Mr Wallace said Transport and Main Roads staff were also working to update the 131940.qld.gov.au road information website this week to include extra information for freight routes.

"Queensland roads have been damaged more than any other piece of State Government infrastructure during the flooding," he said.

"The damage ranges from weakened surfaces and potholes to serious structural issues and whole roads being washed away.

"We are reviewing the heavy vehicle limits on our roads daily and are focussed on getting roads open as quickly as we can."

Mr Wallace said the new 1300 105 647 hotline was specifically established to provide detailed information to the road freight industry and appealed to the general public to leave the hotline free for this purpose.

"It's really important that the line is not jammed with general enquiries.

"Motorists can still access roads information via the usual channels, such as the 131940.qld.gov.au website and hotline, and the RACQ on 1300 130 595."

Mr Wallace also announced that TMR was waiving permit fees for excess-mass and excess-dimension vehicles that were contributing directly to the flood recovery effort.

"We want to ensure that people who are donating their time, equipment and effort are not faced with permit charges for at least the next month," he said.

The Flood Recovery Road Access Group hotline will operate from 6am to 11pm Sunday to Friday from tomorrow. Freight operators can phone the hotline on 1300 105 647.



PLATINUM PARTNERS**FIRS ARRANGEMENT TO SUPPORT FLOOD RELIEF**

The following information has been provided by Department of Transport and Main Roads and is an example of the way in which the Department, in response to the work of the Roads and Transport Infrastructure Flood Recovery Committee, is prepared to cut through "red tape" to assist the industry servicing out customers and the Re-supply and Recovery tasks.

The permission for FIRS registered vehicles to undertake intrastate delivery activities (both pick-up and delivery in the State of Queensland) during the current state of emergency applies to **all** FIRS registered vehicles associated with providing disaster relief, up to and including 31st January 2011. This arrangement will be reviewed at this time.

The Motor Accident Insurance Commission, the regulatory body for Compulsory Third Party (CTP) insurance in Queensland, supports this decision and has received advice from their counterparts in the other states that they have no CTP insurance issues with their states' FIRS registered vehicles operating in Queensland under these arrangements. However, owners need to contact their respective insurers for all matters associated with any form of comprehensive insurance on these vehicles.

ROAD WORKS CUNNINGHAM HIGHWAY - CUNNINGHAM'S GAP

Advice received 18th January 2011 from the Department of Transport & Main Roads

The Cunningham Highway at the Gap remains under stop/go traffic conditions from the helipad to the top of the Gap with various sections of the road needing urgent repairs.



The substantial rain over the holiday period has resulted in various pavement embankment subsidence at the Gap.

These areas are now under investigation by Geotechnical specialists to determine the extent of the damage and the required solution. The department will continue to monitor the Cunningham Highway, including the Gap, on a daily basis to ensure safety of the travelling public.

Road works at the Gap will continue for some time and the department will provide updates when available.

Motorists can expect lengthy delays when travelling through the Gap. *All works are subject to weather.*

Keep up to date with changing traffic conditions by contacting 13 19 40 phone line, visit <http://www.131940.com.au>.

For further information about this flyer please contact the Department of Transport and Main Roads on 3412 0600 or email ao.regions.logan@tmr.qld.gov.au. Subscribe for SMS updates – visit <http://www.cunninghamhighwaysms.com.au> and follow the prompts.

FLOOD RECOVERY WEBSITE AIDS STATE BUSINESSES

Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development, The Honourable Andrew Fraser MP

The State Government has assembled an online 'first-aid kit' to make sure Queensland small businesses affected by flooding are open for business as soon as possible.

Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development Andrew Fraser said many of the 386,000 small businesses across the State have taken a hit and their health is of the utmost importance to the State's recovery.

"The faster small businesses can get back on their feet, the faster they can get back to making an income for themselves, their staff, and providing goods and services to the community," Mr Fraser said.

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"I urge every business, no matter how big or small, to visit the website and find out what assistance is available and how they can make sure they are open for business as soon as possible.

"It's a one-stop shop for information, contacts and links to websites that will provide advice and support they will need."

Mr Fraser said the kit contained comprehensive information about State and Federal Government assistance and grants available to help primary producers and other businesses.

It also offers information on:

- Potential workplace health, safety and security issues
- Clean-up tips
- Rebuilding and repair tips including electricity and gas issues
- Mobile offices and workshops offering flood advice and information
- Your responsibilities as an employer
- Help with insurance
- Tax assistance
- Bank emergency relief packages
- Scams and price increases
- Planning for the future

Mr Fraser said small businesses represented more than 95 per cent of all Queensland businesses.

"Small businesses continue to be the solid foundation of our economy, and the Queensland Government recognises the vital role small businesses play in generating economic activity and employment across the state," Mr Fraser said.

"The Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) is here to help businesses return to full capacity as soon as possible.

"DEEDI officers have been visiting recovery centres, holding workshops and going door-to-door in affected regional centres to inform small businesses about assistance available to them during the recovery process."

DEEDI's information for business is available at <http://www.business.qld.gov.au> or phone 13 25 23.

WORKPLACE HEALTH & SAFETY FOR REPAIRS AFTER FLOODS

Workplace Health & Safety Qld have published some good general guidance material on safety issues to consider when cleaning up after the floods. It's important to stay safe while repairing property after flooding. Below is a check list for approaching all work safely, followed by more detailed information on specific tasks.

The entire article can be found on the QTA Ltd website (<http://www.qta.com.au>) or at the WHSQ website <http://www.deir.qld.gov.au/workplace/subjects/floods/index.htm>



QUEENSLAND LAW SOCIETY OFFERS SUPPORT SERVICES

Queensland Law Society is working with the Queensland legal community to provide much-needed legal support to the State's flood victims.

We are working to ensure practitioners and community members can access the latest information and advice regarding flood support services provided by the legal community. Please choose from one of the links below.

This information may be useful for community members recovering from the floods. Further facts are available via Latest News (<http://www.qls.com.au>). You can also contact QLS on 07 3842 5842 or via info@qls.com.au.

Pro bono legal support services will soon be coordinated across the State for those affected by the floods. Queensland Law Society is helping establish these services in Community Recovery Centres together with the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and Legal Aid Queensland (LAQ). Services for the Southern Downs region are already established, coordinated via LAQ by The Advocacy & Support Centre. If you have any queries, please contact the Society on 07 3842 5842 or via info@qls.com.au.

USEFUL WEBSITES FOR ASSISTANCE INCLUDING CPA AUSTRALIA

For information on Special disaster flood assistance grants, staffing issues, workplace health and safety. Telephone - 13 74 68

<http://www.business.qld.gov.au/risk-management/flood-business-assistance.html>

In addition, information about the Prime Minister's recent announcements regarding the Disaster Recovery Subsidy and the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment - Telephone - Centrelink - 180 22 66

<http://www.disasterassist.gov.au/queenslandfloods>

The CPA Australia website's Disaster Recovery Toolkit for Business is also an excellent resource based on practical experience in rebuilding after the Victorian bushfires.

http://www.cpaaustralia.com.au/cps/rde/xbcr/cpa-site/Disaster_recovery_toolkit_for_business_abridged.pdf

TAX EXEMPTION FOR BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS PAID TO FLOOD VICTIMS

BREAKING NEWS – Issued Friday 21st January 2011

The Government has today announced that clean-up and recovery grants of up to \$25,000, paid to primary producers and small businesses directly affected by the recent flooding that has occurred since 29 November 2010, will be exempt from tax.

Such grants would normally be treated as assessable income, with taxpayers able to claim deductions for the associated expenditure. However, in light of the extraordinary hardship suffered by those affected by the recent flooding, the Government has decided to make these payments non-assessable, non-exempt income. This ensures the grants are exempt from income tax, while also avoiding interactions with other areas of the income tax.

Assistant Treasurer, Bill Shorten, said "The Government does not want primary producers and businesses who have been directly affected by flooding to pay tax on key disaster assistance payments necessary for them to get back on their feet."

"The Federal Government did the same thing for the Victorian Bushfires, so it makes sense for us to offer the same exemption for flood victims."

The Government has also confirmed that the Disaster Income Recovery Subsidy, which was announced by the Prime Minister on 10 January 2011, to assist employees, small business persons and farmers who have lost their income as a direct consequence of the flooding, will also be tax exempt.



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