

Thu 28/04/2011

Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications

Re: The capacity of communication networks and emergency warning systems to deal with emergencies and natural disasters

Dear Sir / Madam,

I live in the Whitsundays and I would like to make a submission to the Committee and enlighten them with my personal experiences during and after the events of the recent Queensland Floods, Cyclone Ului, Cyclone Anthony and Cyclone Yasi.

I am very active in Social Media, in particular Twitter (@QLDOnline and QLD Whitsundays), and I used this media to also assist folks during the Queensland Floods, both Regional and Suburban.

During TC Ului, we lost power and landline telephone (including the ADSL service), and it remained that way for three days. Mobile phone and internet services were lost around six hours after the mains power failed. It was not safe to drive 200km on post cyclone roads to get to the nearest phone signal to advise Family and Friends that I was OK.

During TC Anthony, we lost power and the landline (including the ADSL service), however I used a Laptop, Car Battery, Candles & a wireless internet service to continue reporting. Power was down for 12 hours.

During TC Yasi, we lost power and the landline (including the ADSL service), as well as the local radio services. I was able to be kept informed via wireless internet and my spirits were kept high as I was able to listen to the ABC Radio broadcast via the internet.

I believe Social Media operated very well during the recent 'Big Wet', and it gave us a sign of how Emergency Services in the future will be able to keep everyone informed with fast and accurate information and advice.

Yours faithfully,
James Davison