

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Question No. 18

Senator Humphries asked the following question at the hearing of 22 February 2011:

I understand that there have been a number of AFP officers and agents who have been sent to Queensland to assist following the floods and Cyclone Yasi.

1. How many AFP officers have been sent to Queensland to date?
2. Have there been any problems on the ground with incompatible equipment eg. communication devices?
3. What tasks have AFP officers been fulfilling?

The answer to the honourable Senator's question is as follows:

1. Between 11 January and 24 February 2011, a total of 92 AFP members were committed to supporting the Queensland Police Service (QPS) response to the Queensland flood crisis and Tropical Cyclone Yasi.
 - a. Between 11 January and 18 February 2011, a total of 83 members were committed to flood response operations.
 - b. Between 15 and 24 February 2011, 9 members were deployed to the Tully and Cardwell area in Far North Queensland to assist with post Tropical Cyclone Yasi operations.
2. There were no problems experienced in relation to incompatible equipment. In most instances, AFP members were self sufficient in terms of basic equipment including their AFP accoutrements. In relation to the AFP members undertaking general policing duties with QPS, AFP provided members with hand held and vehicle radio communications which were coded by QPS radio technicians for compatibility requirements. Some AFP vehicles were provided to QPS in support of search and recovery as well as general policing operations in the Lockyer Valley.
3. The AFP members deployed to assist QPS following the floods were primarily deployed to operations in the Lockyer Valley. These operations involved search and recovery taskings between 11 January to 2 February 2011 as well as general policing duties (paired with QPS officers) in the Grantham and Murphy's Creek communities between 20 January to 18 February 2011. These AFP members were supported by a small Forward Command Team that coordinated arrangements with QPS and ensured daily situation reports were prepared and logistics, HR and other issues for the members were managed.

AFP members deployed to the Tully area paired with QPS officers to deliver a high visibility general policing presence in towns in the Tully area and Cardwell. All AFP members performing general policing duties were sworn in as Special Constables of the QPS.