

9.2.8 Main Road WA – Mr Bruce Hancock

Report:

Traffic Management Incidents:

Once an Incident has been declared, an Incident Controller is appointed.

The agency managing the Incident will be determined by the nature and severity of the Incident.

In the case of a bushfire the responsibility may fall to the Local Government in which case generally the Local Governments Chief Fire Office may be the Incident Controller (IC).

The IC in accordance with the State Emergency Management Plan has significant powers to deal with the Incident in a timely manner and to minimise the loss of life or lose /damage of property.

One of the these powers is to take control of other agencies assets, in this case road infrastructure.

It is often necessary to close roads to prevent people from entering the Incident Site and establish Vehicle Control Points (VCP's).

This is usually delegated to WA Police in the first instance as they can deploy resources quickly to the site. Also the extent of the VCP's in relation to the Incident may rapidly evolve and they make need to be expanded/relocated to meet the demands of the Incident.

Other resources can also undertake the function of establishing VCP's at the direction of the IC. These are Local Government, Main Roads, DFES, DBCA etc.

Depending on availability of resources initially the IC may direct these resources to provide VCP's on assets that they do not normally control.

That is Local Government resources may establish a VCP on a Main Roads and visa-versa Main Roads may establish a VCP on a Local Government Rd.

Main Roads has recently reverted to inhouse Day Labour Resources.

When Main Roads are requested to attend an incident they may choose, depending on availability, to send their own staff or they may send a sub-contract Traffic Management resources.

It is important for agencies who are managing Incidents to make early direct contact with Main Roads to identify any potential or actual impact on our assets so we can best manage our response and support of the IC.

There have been a couple of recent events were an Incident affected a Main Roads asset however a request for our assistance was made very late in the day by the IC.

Due to the timing of these Incidents it meant resources where not readily available and there was a delay in responding to the Incident. This put additional strain on the people dealing with the Incident and WA Police Force (WAPOL) who were providing the VCP's.

Also when the active phase of the Incident concluded, and it moved to recovery the IC was not aware of the process for handing back the Asset to the Asset Owner.

In particular the IC must ensure the Asset is safe prior to hand back to the Asset Owner. The Asset Owner then makes their own determination if any other remedial work is required prior to the Asset Owner reopening the road.

There were also a couple of other incidents where the IC endeavoured to open a road. This is in contravention of the State Emergency Management Plan which clearly states it is the responsibility of the Asset Owner as to when and how the asset will be put back into service.

Early contact with Main Roads when Main Roads assets are or are likely to be affected will ensure a smoother management of the assets, VCP's, handback and opening of the road.

Main Roads can also assist by identifying alternate routes or detours if required for the management of traffic to avoid the incident as well as identifying timber structures such as bridges and culverts on both Main Roads and Local Government Roads.