

March 4, 2021

Extraordinary Community Response to Emergency Evacuation

Roper Gulf Regional Council would like to thank everyone who was involved in the emergency evacuation of the Jilkminggan community on Thursday 25 February 2021.

The decision was made by the Local Emergency Committee to evacuate 211 people from Jilkminggan as flood waters continued to rise and surround the community.

Everyone from Jilkminggan was relocated into temporary accommodation at the town hall in Mataranka where 180 people stayed on Thursday and Friday night.

Council staff who were on site to help with the evacuation said they were amazed by the extraordinary community response to the emergency event from both Jilkminggan and Mataranka residents.

“Everyone who was evacuated from the Jilkminggan community did so with patience and cooperation” said Paul Wilson, Central Arnhem Council Services Manager for Roper Gulf Regional Council who was in Mataranka to help with the evacuation.

“We were incredibly impressed by the response of residents, business owners and organisations in Mataranka who responded instantly to the emergency situation and helped in any way they could.

“It was a great example of a neighbouring town offering their support, resources and time to make sure that the evacuation was done efficiently and that everyone who had been relocated to Mataranka felt safe and comfortable during their stay”, Paul said.

Marc Gardner, Acting CEO for Roper Gulf Regional Council said “It was a really responsive effort by all agencies involved including the Police, Education and Health staff along with the Council staff who went above and beyond the call of duty to ensure the safe passage of all Jilkminggan residents.

“We are particularly grateful to the volunteers and businesses of Mataranka and the Katherine Region, who opened up their generosity, providing assistance to ensure that Council facilities could safely accommodate Jilkminggan residents in Mataranka, as well as providing a range of support over the three days of the evacuation emergency. From helicopter observations to cooking meals, it truly was an outstanding community effort.

“I am also extremely proud of all Council staff in both Jilkminggan and Mataranka who worked as a team during the emergency, demonstrating a high level of professionalism, capacity and practicability. With this support, it enabled the emergency evacuation to operate relatively smoothly.”

All residents were safely repatriated back to the Jilkminggan community on Saturday 27 February 2021.

-ENDS-

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Attachment 1: Donkey Flats Crossing

Donkey Flats Crossing on the road into the Jilkminggan community flowing strongly.

Attachment 2: Dinner at the Evacuation Centre

Evacuees lining up for a BBQ dinner at the Evacuation Centre on Thursday night.

Attachment 3: Community BBQ in Mataranka

Police, School Teachers and Mataranka residents all volunteered to help on Thursday night.

Attachment 4: Department of Families and Human Services

Department of Families and Human Services (Emergency Management Team) processing the evacuation papers.