

SUBMISSION TO THE QUEENSLAND FLOODS COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

ABC Radio

The broadcasting by ABC radio during the flood crisis was nothing short of brilliant. Staff members were brought in from other states, so that broadcasting could be maintained for 24 hours per day. There were interviews with key personnel from local Councils, Emergency Management Queensland, Weather Bureau and locals who reported on roads and other vital conditions.

The ABC even developed its own emergency web page, providing a one-stop shop for those seeking rescue and recovery contacts and information.

Maintenance of Council's website

The website of the Western Downs Regional Council was hopelessly slow in keeping residents informed. Primarily this was because so many towns and communities in the shire were severely affected by the floods. All available Councillors and Council staff were taken off usual duties to assist the Local Disaster Coordination Centre.

Consequently, press releases posted on the website weren't timely, and when issued by fatigued and pressured staff, weren't as clear as they needed to be. Often press releases had headlines for Dalby and its creek levels but gave flood information for other towns such as Chinchilla or Condamine and their local creek or river. In an emergency, if someone needs information about his/her local area, it should be quite clear by the headline where to look.

Surely some expertise from outside the area could be provided to a Council when its resources are so stressed and stretched - even if it only extended to uploading podcasts of interviews so at least there would be up-to-date information on its website.

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