

Author: Cr Graeme Scheu : nlb  
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Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry  
PO Box 1738  
**BRISBANE QLD 4001**

Dear Sir / Madam

### **Re: Flood Inquiry Submission**

The Goondiwindi Regional Council wishes to make the following comments in relation to the Queensland Floods Commission Inquiry.

#### **1. Use of Unregistered Vehicles During Flood Events**

The Goondiwindi Regional Council believes local authorities should have the authority to issue temporary road use permits for vehicles following the declaration of a disaster event. The conditions of the permit would include provision that the vehicles are only to be used on public roads for the purpose of disaster recovery and relief.

A particular example in our region during the January flood event meant that available machinery located at a local mine site was unable to assist the flood recovery operations in a nearby area as they were unregistered for general road use. This type of issue would also be applicable to many rural properties where farm machinery (tractors etc.) could be utilised if they were able to travel roads.

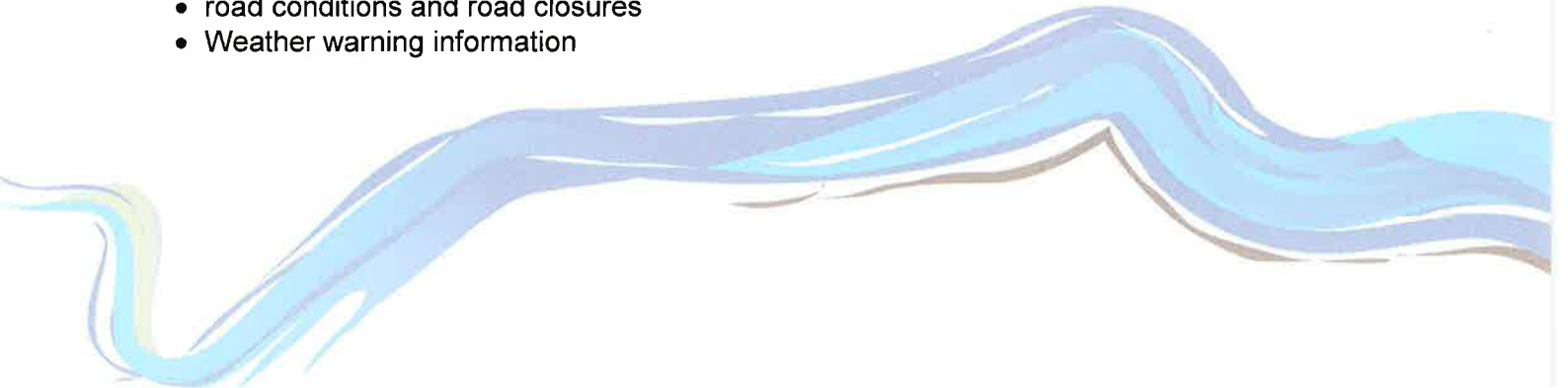
#### **2. Uniform Disaster Management System**

It is this Council's view that all Local Disaster Management Groups be required to operate on the same management system (Guardian). This would enable resource sharing across areas affected by disaster events and also ensure the provision of an efficient and effective approach to disaster events across the State.

#### **3. Cross Border Coordination and Information Distribution**

##### **a) Information Distribution**

Located along the Queensland / New South Wales border, Goondiwindi Regional Council and its residents experienced great difficulty in acquiring relevant flood information including:

- dam release data
  - road conditions and road closures
  - Weather warning information
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The cross border issues are significant and we believe there needs to be mandatory coordination of activities between Queensland and New South Wales water authorities, road authorities and emergency services.

#### **b) Emergency Management Coordination**

It is essential that local emergency services coordination across the NSW / Queensland border is implemented. The inability of emergency personnel to access and address relevant information and issues across the two states in a disaster situation poses a serious threat to life and property. All Emergency Services require reciprocal rights in a buffer zone at least 35km either side of the Queensland / New South Wales border. **This arrangement should be in effect at all times, not just in a disaster event.**

#### **c) Land Use Planning Coordination**

Land Use Planning Coordination across the Queensland / New South Wales border, particularly in relation to levee bank constructions is essential to ensure all parties are adequately protected against flooding events without negatively impacting on others.

#### **4. Weather Reading Stations and Modelling Data**

It is acknowledged that State hydrologists were under extreme workloads during the January Flood event. In the case of the flooding in the Texas area, more timely provision of information would have enabled faster response times. In addition, it is felt that the number and recording frequency of the weather reading stations in the Dumaresq River was not adequate during the January flood event.

Of particular note is the availability of Digital Elevation Mapping for all local Council authorities. A small regional Council, we are simply not in a position to financially fund the purchase of this mapping and would strongly encourage the provision of same by State and Federal Governments to all local authorities.

#### **5. Realignment of Emergency Service Boundaries**

Council believes that Emergency Service Boundaries (State) need to be tied in with existing Council boundaries. The January flood event highlighted the issues faced when a Council area needs to deal with multiple authorities. Examples from the Goondiwindi Regional Council include:

- Fire Services – Millmerran included in the local Goondiwindi district (Toowoomba Regional Council) but Inglewood is based in Warwick; and
- Police – Texas Police in Stanthorpe District with remainder in Warwick.

#### **6. Aged Health Liaison in Disaster Event**

In light of the evacuation activities associated with the January flood event, Goondiwindi Regional Council supports improved communications and cooperation between Queensland Health and Aged Health Care facilities in preparing for potential future disaster events. Clear guidelines in relation to responsibilities will serve to avoid any unnecessary confusion.

I thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

Yours faithfully



Gr Graeme Scheu  
MAYOR