

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND



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OF QUEENSLAND LTD

**SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION
ON
FLOOD PREPAREDNESS ISSUES
TO
QUEENSLAND FLOOD COMMISSION OF INQUIRY**

7 APRIL 2011

1. Background

LGAQ provided an initial submission (LGAQ #1) to the Flood Inquiry on 11 March 2011. This supplementary submission to LGAQ #1 provides some additional comments following member council input.

LGAQ held a forum on 14 March 2011 at its Infrastructure and Planning Symposium that was attended by councils from across the State. This provided an opportunity to share experiences and learnings from recent natural disasters, as well as to discuss the LGAQ Submission lodged on 11 March 2011.

Member Councils supported the thrust of the initial submission (LGAQ #1) and the comments and suggestions made.

Member Councils wished to emphasise and expand on a number of matters raised in LGAQ #1. Specific comments included:

1. The importance of all relevant groups including local politicians being represented on, and participating in, LDMGs;
2. The importance of following communication protocols between LDMGs, DDMGs and SDMG. Well intentioned interventions particularly from high profile visitors need to be coordinated and integrated to avoid confusion and duplication of effort;
3. Maintaining reporting protocols and avoiding ad hoc requests from individual agencies and stakeholders and pressures to change the way things are done during an event;
4. The need to fast-track the current COAG project on location based SMS messages to mobile phones in the area to overcome current problems in alerting those without a billing address in a defined area. It is understood that proposals from carriers are currently being evaluated;
5. Reviewing the way in which the SES 132500 number operates to ensure a streamlined approach to the interaction between the State call centre and district and local SES operations. In recent events, there were some instances of delays in transmitting requests for assistance to a local SES;
6. The need to improve cross-State border arrangements to ensure a coordinated and appropriately resourced response to events;
7. The need to improve cross-LDMG and cross DDMG interaction within the same catchment to maximise information exchange and upstream/downstream communication;
8. The possibility of developing MOUs between councils to provide additional staff resources during a disaster event;
9. The importance of streamlining and coordinating media interactions to avoid high levels of demand on the workload of Mayors during an event from the same media group;

10. The need for protocols on the use of Facebook and other social media so that inaccurate and malicious information is not posted on sites and that those responsible for any false information can be dealt with by the courts;
11. Concerns that powers to order people to leave properties expected to be impacted by major events may not be adequate at present.

LGAQ #1 noted the need for protocols to be developed on the responsibilities of dam operators in alerting both the community and councils on potential impacts of releases.

Dam operators should be responsible for immediate and direct release of data on rainfall, stream flow, flood forecasts and gate opening / releases from dams. Such data should be provided in an open and transparent manner to all councils and emergency managers.

The situation at present is that it is BOM, rather than dam operators, that is responsible for flood warning, although important data relating to potential flooding is the property of dam operators.