

CONSTITUENT ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

BUNDAMBA ELECTORATE

1 DISASTER MANAGEMENT ACT (2003)

1.1 Issues

The Disaster Management Act was passed by the Queensland Parliament in 2003. The Act, pursuant to Division Three, Disaster Management Plans for local governments. It states in Subdivision 1, Section 57 that:

- (1) *A local government must prepare a plan (a local disaster management plan) for disaster management in the local government's area.*
- (2) *The plan must include provision for the following—*
 - (a) *the State group's strategic policy framework for disaster management for the State, and the local government's policies for disaster management;*
 - (b) *the roles and responsibilities of entities involved in disaster operations and disaster management in the area;*
 - (c) *the co-ordination of disaster operations and activities relating to disaster management performed by the entities mentioned in paragraph (b);*
 - (d) *events that are likely to happen in the area;*
 - (e) *strategies and priorities for disaster management for the area;*
 - (f) *the matters stated in the disaster management guidelines as matters to be included in the plan;*
 - (g) *other matters about disaster management in the area the local government considers appropriate.*

The Act also states in Section 59:

- (1) *A local government may review, or renew, its local disaster management plan when the local government considers it appropriate.*
- (2) *However, the local government must review the effectiveness of the plan at least once a year.*

1.2 Constituent Questions

- Why was the Local Government Disaster Management Plan only in place in 2006, some three years after the legislation was passed?
- Has the Plan been reviewed on an annual basis as required by Section 59 of the Disaster Management Act?
- Why is the Plan not up-to-date? For example, in 02.01.09, it refers to Swanbank Paper, which was announced by Council several years ago but never built?
- As it is understood that mayors usually chair the committee. Why is the Chair of the Works Committee also the Chair of this most important committee? Can it be verified that the Mayor has attended only one committee meeting since 2003 and why is this duty such a low priority?

2 STATE PLANNING POLICY GUIDELINES—FLOOD PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE COMPOSITION AND ROLE

2.1 Issues

The State Planning Policy Guideline mitigates the *Adverse Impacts of Flood, Bushfire and Landslide Act* issued in June 2003, in Appendix two: *Undertaking Natural Hazard Assessment—Flood* outlines several issues in relation to flood planning.

It includes a definition of a flood, defined flood events and outlines a recommendation when undertaking floodplain management studies and plans. The process is *Flood Plan Management in Australia: Best Practice Principles and Guidelines* (the standing committee on Agriculture and Resource Management SCARM Report).

2.2 Constituent Questions

- Was the SCARM Report ever considered by the Ipswich City Council?
- Was a Flood Plan Advisory Committee comprising a balanced mix of elected, administrative and community representatives, as recommended, ever considered?
- Was a Flood Plan Advisory Committee established and if so, when, and who are the members of this committee?
- How can members of the community access reports of the Flood Plan Advisory Committee?

3 STATE POLICY PLANNING GUIDELINES— CONSIDERATION OF WARNINGS AND COMMUNICATION WITH RESIDENTS

3.1 Issues

The State Planning Policy Guideline Mitigating the Adverse Impacts of Flood, Bushfire and Landslide issued in June 2003 outlines in A2.30 Appendix J of the SCARM Report and its definition of flood hazard.

The report defines categories as low, medium, high and extreme. Table A2.1 show land uses appropriate to various levels of severity of flood hazard and outlines that in the 'extreme category', appropriate land uses across the floodplain are rural, recreation, open space and conservation and in the same in the 'high category', as above with special controls on commercial industry and floods.

3.2 Constituent Questions

- Were these issues ever considered by the Ipswich City Council in relation to town planning management and if not, why not?
- Why were development applications for unit blocks approved and building approvals granted for unit blocks in the Goodna area, especially in Mill Street, Spalding Court and the Jabiru units in Redbank?
- Why were new houses given approval to be built in a number of streets near Brisbane Terrace when the Ipswich City Council was well aware that this area flooded in 1974?
- Were the applicants for building approval since 1974 ever informed by Council that the area had flooded in 1974, including warnings regarding potential risks to life and property?

4 LOCAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLAN— INSURANCE ISSUES

4.1 Issues

Section 03.04 'Insurance Incentives/Disincentives' outlined in the Ipswich City Local Disaster Management Plan states that:

COAG has the expectation that local governments will make available to the insurance industry and the public, information on flooding in its area and that the insurance industry will provide insurance cover at reasonable premiums.

The outcome of this expectation would be a lowering of hardship claims by the community.

4.2 Constituent Questions

- Has the Ipswich City Council made available such information on flooding to insurance companies and if so, when was this provided and to which insurance companies?
- Can constituents access details of this information as they prepare to fight insurance companies in relation to claims that have been so far refused by these companies?
- Has Council released the hydrology reports requested from the Insurance industry to allow them to process claims? If not, then when can flood victims expect its release?

5 LOCAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLAN—PUBLIC EDUCATION

5.1 Issues

The Ipswich City Local Disaster Management Plan in Section 03.03.02 relates to public education. Furthermore, in Section 04.02.01 a section describes warning systems and public education.

Section 04.02.02 outlines the warnings distribution process and states that:

'upon implementation of this plan all public warnings will be distributed through the Ipswich City Co-ordination Centre.'

Many residents who were flooded in the Goodna and Redbank areas have complained about the lack of advice in relation to flood warnings and the lack of timely advice given to them.

As a result, many residents (and businesses in the central business district area of Goodna) did not have adequate time to shift furniture, photographs, clothes and other valuable items to high ground.

In fact, some residents were forced to scramble over the pedestrian bridge across the Ipswich Motorway to Goodna State School in a desperate attempt to save themselves from the rising waters. Some could not return to their homes as the Ipswich Motorway was flooded, as well as Council roads.

5.2 Constituent Questions:

- When was the Ipswich City Council advised of the severity of the 2011 flood and by whom?
- At what time and on what date was a decision taken to alert members of the community and by what means? (eg. SMS)

- When were the SMS-type messages actually received by the community if at all?
- Why was it left to Queensland Police, with loud hollers at St. Ives Shopping Centre, to get people out of the centre and why were police officers desperately left to contact householders on the Brisbane Terrace side of Goodna to get out?
- Has Council undertaken community training in dealing with disasters and if so why weren't local communities made aware of preparations? Who were residents required to seek advice from in each affected area?
- What community education procedures were undertaken to ensure residents understood the plan and various roles undertaken by people mentioned in the plan?

6 LOCAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLAN—PUBLIC INFORMATION

6.1 Issues

Section 04.02 of the Ipswich City Local Disaster Management Plan outlines warnings and in Section 04.02.05 it relates to public information.

It should be noted that the Lord Mayor of Brisbane had saturated media outlets advising residents of Brisbane to get onto the Brisbane City Council website and look up the flood maps. I understand that some people in Ipswich followed the advice of the Brisbane Lord Mayor and logged onto the Ipswich City Council website, but then to their absolute dismay, there were no flood maps for the Ipswich area at all. Many people telephoned the Ipswich City Council but were unhappy with the advice received.

Furthermore, many people were concerned about where they could be evacuated to (ie. the location of the evacuation centres) but the Ipswich City Disaster Management Plan was also not available on the website.

6.2 Constituent Questions:

- Why were the flood maps for Ipswich City Council not available on the Ipswich City Council website in the same way they were available on the Brisbane City Council website?
- Who made the decision to not include the flood maps on the website and when was the decision made?
- Why was the Ipswich City Local Disaster Management Plan not available on the website, especially the location of evacuation centres?
- What methods of communications are considered by authorities if no electricity service is available and possibly no phone or mobile

phone communication is available to residents in affected areas due to the natural disaster?

7 LOCAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLAN— EVACUATION

7.1 Issues:

The Ipswich City Council Local Disaster Management Plan in Section 7.01 Evacuation Plan states that the aim is:

'to co-ordinate the activities of organisations involved in preparing for evacuating communities.'

The lead agency for evacuation centres is stated as the Ipswich City Council with support agencies being the Queensland Police Service, SES, Red Cross and the Department of Transport.

The actual, real evacuation centres in the electorate of Bundamba were: Shiloh Christian Church (Goodna), Redbank State School (Redbank), St. Augustine's Catholic College (Augustine Heights) and Riverview Neighbourhood House (Riverview). Some people were also housed at the Salvation Army Riverview.

Only Redbank State School is listed in the Council's list of evacuation centres. In fact, in Goodna the evacuation centres should have been Goodna State School and Goodna Special School and in Riverview it should have been Riverview State School.

There are no evacuation centres listed at all for the newer suburbs of Springfield, Springfield Lakes, Springfield Central, Augustine Heights or Ripley.

The Shiloh Church was requested to be opened by Queensland Police with a direct request to Pastor Alan Morris, the Redbank State School was opened by my electorate officer, Tracey Bradley and the Riverview Neighbourhood House was opened by Pastor Paulo and members of the management committee as people turned up there for shelter.

The evacuation centres were fully funded by those churches and local community organisations as well as from donations by local people, including a significant contribution by myself as State MP.

7.2 Constituent Questions

- As the Ipswich City Council is the lead agency for evacuation centres, why didn't the Council fulfil its lead role in opening centres at the locations as outlined in its Local Disaster Management Plan?
- Why was the St. Augustine's evacuation centre closed down by the Ipswich City Council approximately twenty-four hours after it was opened when it was deemed necessary by locals to keep it open as it had shower facilities that were unavailable at the Shiloh Church?
- Which level of government is responsible for the payment of costs associated with these evacuation centres in the initial phases and over the next week of the evacuation?
- Are these costs then coverable at a higher level of government?
- Why didn't the Ipswich City Council support the evacuation centres after they were open leaving residents and community organisations which were not trained or funded for these purposes?

8 LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES— INSPECTION OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT SITES

8.1 Issues

It is understood that it is a function of local government, pursuant to various legislative arrangements, to inspect people's houses and make appropriate professional decisions in relation to whether the house could be re-built or whether it should be demolished and in terms of the latter, issue a demolition order.

8.2 Constituent Questions

- When will the Ipswich City Council undertake this work, and what are the timelines for this work to be completed, considering that many people need decisions as soon as possible so that they can move on with their lives?

9 LOCAL GOVERNMENT DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLAN—CO-ORDINATION OF CLEANUP EFFORT

9.1 Issues

When the flood waters receded, there were many thousands of volunteers who turned up to help local people. The people were really grateful for all of the assistance.

However, there was an absolute sense of confusion as to what level of government was responsible for co-ordinating the clean up, especially

in the Goodna and Redbank areas. Indeed, many people have stated that it was only when the military arrived that there was any sense of organisation and control.

9.2 Constituent Questions

- What level of government was lawfully in control of the cleanup operation?
- How could it be that there was information being taken from volunteers who rushed to help out, but there was no such co-ordination of the list of victims of the flood, nor their addresses and extent of damage?
- Would the Inquiry please examine a better way for cleanup operations in the future that could be standardised in legislation?
- Why were churches, unions, The Origin Alliance and others left to provide essential services as part of the cleanup such as port-a-loos?
- Why did it take so long to supply skips to places such as St Ives Shopping Centre which, due to its food outlets, had potential public health concerns about flood damaged stock and food stuffs in the car park under the sun?
- Can consideration be put in place to examine the various community organisations such as SES, Neighbourhood watches, ambulance committees to receive training and resources so that they may allocate tasks to individuals to be triggered by the members of the Local Disaster Management Group? Such a measure would ensure that no duplication or failure to undertake important roles in evacuation, distribution of water, sand bags and other essential items and to co ordinate clean up efforts.

10 LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT AND INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLEANUP EFFORT

10.1 Issues

People are generally well aware that all levels of government are required to undertake their work and provide the necessary funding and the priorities of the work in accordance with various statutes. Many are of the view that all communities need to be well prepared for any catastrophic event and that these tasks should be prioritised as it relates to people's lives and their property.

10.2 Constituent Questions

- Have all levels of government—Commonwealth, State and Local—abided by the law in relation to the flood disaster, specifically in terms of the Disaster Management Act and all town planning laws?

- Would the Inquiry consider, if there has been any neglect or deliberate acts of not following the law, consider an action in accordance to Section 204 of the Criminal Code in relation to disobedience to statute law?
- Would the Inquiry consider recommending the amendment of statute law, making a particular office (eg. Mayor) personally responsible for the actions of the Council, and furthermore, prescribe penalties if the statute is not implemented, not adequately staffed or not adequately funded?

11 FUNDING FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLAN

11.1 Issues

Many people are concerned at the level of resourcing by the Queensland Government in relation to disaster management planning as well as the Ipswich City Council. They are concerned that there are adequate funds available and adequate staff employed, as well as adequate training of these staff.

11.2 Constituent Questions

- How many full time officers are employed by the Queensland Government on disaster management and what is the budget?
- How many full time officers are employed by the Ipswich City Council on disaster management planning, or the full time equivalent?
- What is the budget for this function and who is the commanding officer in relation to disasters?
- How does the Ipswich City Council functional response compare to other councils, including Brisbane and far north Queensland councils?