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ABN: 23 439 388 197

Reference: 117606

1 April 2011

Dear Sir/Madam

Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry GPO Box 1738 Brisbane QLD 4001

QFCI

Date:

JM

Exhibit Number:

E

Requirement for Written Information

Council acknowledges receipt of your letter received at this office on 24 March 2011 and offers the following comments in the same sequence as to the request for information:

- 1. In accordance with Council's adopted Disaster Management Plan. Training events held during the year were the Disaster Coordination Group Workshop held on 12 May 2010. This training was conducted by a representative of EMQ and was directed towards the establishment of Local Disaster Coordination Groups. The purpose of the Local Disaster Coordination Group is to establish a core group of people within the local community, who possess the local knowledge and expertise to ensure that disaster management and disaster operations within the local area are managed. Representatives of LDMG attended Event Operations Coordination Tool for use by Disaster District Coordination Centres. A regional application for the Guardian System has subsequently been made and approved for installation within the regional area which will increase coordination capacity and regional cooperation. The Chair of the LDMG and an administration officer also attended the LGAQ Disaster Management Conference during the 2010 calendar year.
- 2. It is believed that this item was not applicable to our areas temporary levees have limited to no effect given the nature of the Burnett river. Minor sand bagging was conducted in Mundubbera around the bowls club by volunteers.
- 3. CEO-Local Disaster Coordinator/Director of Technical Services attended EMQ on 25 October 2010. Information pertaining to the Burnett River indicated that it was a number of years since a flood warning had been issued. This event was an opportunity to exchange information on a regional basis though it is difficult to quantify the local effectiveness of the information. The information did assist with developing relationships with BOM personnel.
- 4. EMQ representatives to the LDMG briefed the Local Disaster Management Group through its normal meeting cycle as to the progress and implementation of the Act. The LDMG

- Chair, Administration Officer and Local Disaster Coordinator also received a progress briefing during a workshop in Maryborough by EMQ representatives.
- 5. Council supplied budget provided each year for maintenance of facilities and support though this is done through the Local Government budgetary process. Recruitment and training is a function of EMQ and Council does not have knowledge of EMQ funding levels. North Burnett Regional Council contributes, for example, a budget of \$46,100 for disaster management costs, a further \$18,000 for emergency management services operating and \$5,500 for facility maintenance. LDMG members engage with SES Controllers through phone contact and face to face meetings as well as through EMQ. The biggest issue encountered by the SES was the lack of manpower. There was simply a number of people on holidays, or people that were isolated on their properties themselves. For example, Council annual shut down occurred over this period with the majority of staff taking annual leave. The local SES were also restricted through family leave commitments.
- 6. On call registers of available local government staff were developed by the North Burnett Regional Council prior to the event. The Local Disaster Coordinator, Director of Technical Services and the Chair of the LDMG rotated attendance to the SDCC and DDCC teleconference so BOM updates were received. Equipment and vehicles were kept in a standby condition.
- 7. The primary focus was to prevent injury and loss of life in the event. It is noted that there is significant infrastructure damage. The estimated cost of the event in Council owned infrastructure is approximately \$20 million. North Burnett Regional Council is seeking assistance from DEEDI in regard to the loss of agricultural production and the cost of privately owned infrastructure. The transition the LDMG group made to the recovery phase went smoothly. This transition occurred as the flood waters receded from the major event of the 27th and 28th of December peak. Coordination groups were quickly established and immediate cooperation with State Government agencies assisted with this transition.
- 8. Actions taken to preserve vital infrastructure were taken as appropiate. For example, switch boards and removeable electrical items were removed from pumping stations where they were able to be removed prior to the river height increasing. These items were removed through a combination of Council staff and plumbing and electrical contractors. The historic positioning of a range of this infrastructure, particuarly water and sewerage infrastructure, placed it at risk due to its proximity to the Burnett River. This is an area that will be assessed during any reconstruction of damaged infrastructure. In regard to resupply, LDMG worked closely with the DDCC to manage resupply of essential items such as milk products for example. This close working relationship was through direct, multidaily email and phone contact with DDCC and daily attendance at the SDCC.
- 9. Attendance to the SDCC and DDCC teleconference so BOM updates were received. Direct contact with BOM during the event through the aforementioned teleconferences and phone contact on the 27th of December to obtain a specific briefing on the Burnett River. There was also continual monitoring of BOM website. Information disseminated via all forms of media and through NBRC website as well as direct contact by Council staff and SES volunteers either in person or via telephone. This information included media releases, river height details, safe conduct in flood water, health warnings, recovery information and access to services and assistance for example. Council also updated its road information on the web site so it was current daily. This direct contact was made prior to, during and

after the actual flooding event to disseminate warnings, information pertaining to flood heights and recovery information and assistance for example. Direct contact was made with SunWater in regard to dam releases during the event including advice from them on their proposed modelling.

- 10. An identified issue after the event was that of situation awareness of gathering up to date information for the LDMG and the DDCC. This issue was raised by the DDCC representative at the event debrief. This involved the degree to which accurate and timely information was available from a variety of sources which included Council staff, SES volunteers, Government Departments, Community Groups and Individuals.
- 11. Significant road infrastructure damage occurred with a region wide closure of roads including the Burnett Highway. Approximately 90% of all Local Government roads were damaged from a total km length of 3848. All of our communites were isolated at one point of time and the greater majority were isolated for significant periods of time. For example, the Good Night Scrub and communities South of the Boyne River were isolated for approximately 6 weeks. Signage was erected however due to the scale of the event and the area affected, our council and that of neighbouring councils ran out of signage with resupply difficult due to the extended nature of the event and the Brisbane distrubuters of signage being inundated.
- 12. Evacuations were conducted on a voluntary basis from the townships of Mundubbera and Gayndah with the evacuees being cared for by family and friends as detailed below:
 - 26 houses inundated (22 in Mundubbera & 4 in Gayndah);
 - 46 yards inundated (18 in Mundubbera & 28 in Gayndah);
 - 90% of local industry affected (mostly primary producers);
 - No evacuation centres operated but 82 persons self-evacuated to friends and family;
 - Significant damage caused to road infrastructure and water supplies;
 - Emergency road and air transport food re-supply required;
 - Some communities cut-off from main centres since mid-December 2010;
- 13. Town halls were the coordination centres for any evacuations, though with this event locals looked after locals with all evacuations voluntary and evacuees staying with family or friends. Contingency arrangements were considered in Gayndah with the District High School a potential future site if needed though the town halls had all the necessary kitchen and sanitary facilities to suffice. With evacuees staying with family and friends it was difficult to record exact numbers.
- 14. There were no deaths from this event in our regional area. This is something that all involved are very proud of.
- 15. The Queensland Police Service were extremely helpful and the new District Disaster Arrangements worked well. Local QPS officers worked from the Mundubbera Council disaster coordination centre and were extremely helpful in the event and subsequent recovery phase. Regional QPS and DDC was in multiple daily contact and offered advice and assistance as required. QPS and DDC were proactive in contacting the LDMG. Other agencies that provided assistance from the Local Coordination Centres included QAS, QFRS

- and Qld Health. Regular contact was received from EMQ and DDCC. Other departmental agencies both State and Federal interacted promptly in the recovery phase.
- 16. The Council and the LDMG worked well with the District Disaster Committee and were in regular and constant contact. Daily teleconferences with SDCC were attended. Within the LCC there was hourly contact and briefings. At the DDCC level daily briefings were carried out at least twice daily. Any advice that was required was sourced through the DDCC and provided promptly and in a timely manner.
- 17. Residents of the North Burnett Regional Council area, SES units and Council experienced Telstra problems with delayed calls and messages coming through and the loss of service to a number of properties. Also some difficulties were experienced with the 132 500 number, which is the number used to contact the SES, when this number/system crashed. Radio access and perhaps a designated channel is needed between authorities to communicate more effectively. E.g. when running around in the middle of the night evacuating homes. There were also problems with delays in receiving messages through mobiles due to Telstra problems. In some instances messages were received 16 hours late. The issue of flood boats and appropriately trained operators was raised through the event and debrief process.
- 18. Community education and information a focus for the coming year. The adequacy of the community's response during the event and after the event was very satisfactory and demonstrated the capacity and resilience of the local communities. The voluntary evacuations worked well, with people following directions. A difficulty observed with the voluntary evacuations was that there was no mechanics to coordinate or adequately track numbers of evacuees. Residents of the affected towns assisted each other with the movement of property and they did get involved in the cleanup and support for victims of the flood. The LCC coordinated the above events however the LDMG will create local emergency management committees to improve the coordination of these activities.
- 19. Some of these issues occurred as there was not enough warning time with the river levels. The advice received at approximately 3 pm on the afternoon of 27 December Indicated the rivers would not peak in Mundubbera until the morning of the 28 of December. The Burnett River rose rapidly and exceeded the expected river peak by 10:00 pm on the night of 27 December. This had a flow on impact to townships down stream and meant the warning times were dramatically shortened. It would be useful to share information and data on river heights etc. with Ergon Energy and other authorities. It is recommended that several points along the river be fitted and managed with extra guages to record data and increase preparation time in the future by BOM. Heavy reliance was on residents visually observing the river height to make assumptions about the flood. Information we received from BOM was delayed and inaccurate and there is a need for live data from the Burnett River.
- 20. Our area is a low socio economic region and recognised as such by both State and Federal levels of Government and ABS supports this data. There is a need for long term counselling services that has been identified through the recovery process to aid community through the impacts of this event. Being a low socio economic area, residents affected both financially and socially have limited capacity for renewal of assets and often support networks. The impact on employment for the non-skilled sector of the community was significant with the potential loss of horticultural work.

21. Signage at road closures needs a 'No Entry' sign in addition the 'Road Closed' sign to allow Police to enforce the closure. It is my understanding that a 'Road Closed' sign on its own is not enforceable for an on the spot fine but if there is a 'No Entry' sign present as well, Police can fine the offender \$333 and 3 demerit points. The relevant legislation should be amended to allow Police to be able to issue a fine for a 'Road Closed' sign only.

On a final note, the event strained the Local resources of our region and the subsequent reinterpretation by State and Federal Levels of Government of NDRRA Guidelines and demands for information though short time constraints continue to strain Local Government resources within our region. Consideration needs to be given to the demands placed on local government in regional areas and appropriate funding assistance provided.

If you have any further enquiries regarding this matter, do not hesitate to contact Council on 1300 696 272. Please quote reference 117606 and you will be referred to the appropriate officer for further assistance.

Yours faithfully

WIP Pitt

Chief Executive Officer

QUEENSLAND FLOODS COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

STATEMENT OF MARK JOHN PATRICK PITT

I, Mark John Patrick Pitt, Chief Executive Officer of North Burnett Regional Council make the following statement under oath as required by the Commissioner of Inquiry:

Documents requested by the Requirement dated 1 March 2011

1. To the best knowledge of Council all official records requested by 1 March 2011 were supplied. Given limited resources and the short time period of these requests this information is supplied in good faith and again to the best of Council's ability and resources.

Draft flood studies obtained or made available to the Council since March 2011

2. On 23 June 2011 Councillors were provided with an internal information report on, and copies of, The Final Report on the Inland Flooding Study and its associated appendices. This was a generic study commissioned by the Local Government Association Queensland and others. One appendix references recommendations for Gayndah town. This is discussed further in the next question. No other draft flood studies have been obtained or made available since March 2011.

Council's intention regarding recommendations contained in the Gayndah Inland Flood Study, including the reasons for Council's approach, minutes of Council meetings and documents considered and/or adopted by Council

3. I have assumed the document referred to is the Final Report on the Inland Flooding Study which was a result of a joint project of the Department of Environment and Resource Management, the Department of Infrastructure and Planning and the Local Government Association of Queensland and not the Gayndah Flood Study completed by consultants BMT WBM. The BMT WBM study recommended that Council adopt a climate change factor of 20% in considering its Defined Flood Event. Council was not comfortable with this approach and referred the matter to LGAQ where the Inland Flood Study project was initiated.

The Final Report on the Inland Flooding Study and its associated appendices was provided to members of Council for information on 23 June 2011 as per the attached. To date, the report has not been discussed formally and no recommendations have been adopted or not adopted.



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At its Policy and Strategy meeting held on 3 February 2009 Council passed the following resolution:

Defined Flood Event - Gayndah

C/01.09.13

Moved Cr P Baker Seconded Cr FO Whelan.

That Council acknowledges the results of the Gayndah Flood Study Report prepared by BMT WBM and adopts the 1% AEP Flood Event. Further, that the maximum flood levels in each segment of Drawing 11-3 of the Gayndah Flood Study be adopted as the basis for determining habitable floor heights and that habitable floor height be 300mm above those levels. Further that any future benchmark determined by the State Government for climate change allowance relative to the Burnett River catchment be considered at such time as that determination is made. Further that advice from Deacons not be sought at this point of time.

CARRIED 7/0

Changes to the Council's land planning processes, policies or other statutory instruments in response to the flooding that occurred during the period 1 December 2010 to 31 January 2011, including drafts, considerations and adopted documents of Council

4. There have been no changes to Council's land planning processes, policies or other statutory instruments in response to flooding that occurred during the period 1 December 2010 and 31 January 2011.

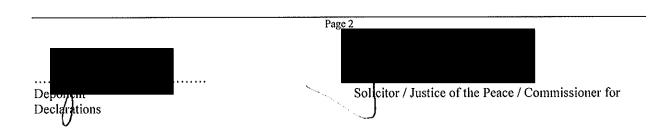
How information about flood risk for specific properties is made available and any processes for obtaining this information applicable to each of the following:

- a) members of the public;
- b) insurance companies;
- c) prospective developers and their representatives.
- 5. Council's Department of Development and Environment Services staff make information available about flood risk for specific properties on an as requested basis.

For Gayndah and Mundubbera based inquiries they provide copies of maps showing adopted Defined Flood Events and provide advice to obtain independent assessment of the AHD level of the property in question. Council has an interactive map which was provided with the BMT WBM Gayndah Flood Study which identifies the highest point on any particular parcel of land contained within the flood study area.

For Monto based enquiries, residents are provided with information contained in Qantec McWilliam's advice to Monto Shire Council dated 5 January 2007.

No information is available for the remaining towns in the region.

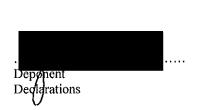


Whether and to what extent council infrastructure (for example, sewers, roads, stormwater) was affected by flooding that occurred during the period 1 December 2010 to 31 January 2011, citing specific examples where possible

6. North Burnett Regional Council experienced significant damage to its public infrastructure including rural roads (100%), water intake systems at two towns, sewerage pump stations, treated effluent holding tanks, caravan parks, parks along rivers and public buildings.

I offer the following examples and additional information:

- The rural road network was initially damaged from a heavy rain and flood event in March 2010. NDRRA approval to reconstruct this damage (about \$650,000.00) was not provided until January 2011.
- The December 2010 event (including the March 2010 event and other heavy rain events in the lead up to the December 2010 event) impacted on 100% of the Council controlled rural road network. All roads were either flooded, damaged from flash floods or their pavements weakened due to saturation.
- In January 2011, Council had closed a number of roads and at its Policy and Strategy Meeting held on 1 February 2011, it resolved to impose a 15 Tonne load limit on ALL roads and streets under its control. Road closures were detailed on Council's webpage. The load limiting was publicly advertised, road advisory signage installed and a series of public meetings were held to explain the system. The purpose was to protect the road network and allow it to dry out and re-open quicker with reduced damage.
- My staff considered requests for variations to the load limits based on the individual roads capacity to carry greater loadings. This system continued until the load limiting system was withdrawn on 22 May 2011. Although the roads were still saturated, a decision was made to remove the load limiting to allow the citrus fruit crop to transported to market and lot fed stock to be transported.
- Some damage was incurred with township streets but the damage was minor in nature.
- The raw water intakes, pumping stations and control systems for the water supplies to the towns of Mundubbera and Gayndah were destroyed by the flooded rivers. The river beds changed as a result of the flood and these towns are still reliant on temporary pumping systems until new designs are approved and the pumps reconstructed. The Eidsvold Water Treatment Plant was affected by flood water due to isolation. The towns were subject to water restrictions with Gayndah and Mundubbera still on level 3 restrictions.



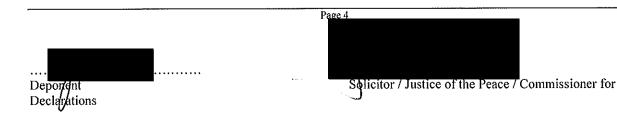
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- The sewerage pump stations and holding tanks were flooded at the towns of Mundubbera, Gayndah and Monto. Where possible, control panels and electrical systems were removed prior to flooding to allow an expeditious recovery of these systems after the flood water resided. During the flood, effluent was discharged to the river system from Mundubbera and Gayndah pump stations that had been shut down. Council reported these overflows to DERM.
- Two caravan and camping grounds at Paradise Dam and Mingo Crossing went under water due to the high flow rate into this dam.
- Boat Ramps at both Mt Debateable and Greys Water hole have been destroyed and another ski area (buildings, BBQs, jetty and other structures) at Mundubbera was destroyed.
- Parks along the Burnett River were damaged as a result of flooding.
- Public buildings received some minor damage.
- A new bridge was destroyed, floodways damaged and/or destroyed and culverts damaged on various roads. Storm water systems within the towns were not damaged.

Details of reconstruction of infrastructure including costs and programs

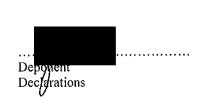
- 7. I have assumed that the reference in this question relates to question 6 and not question 5 as stated in the Commission's request. On that basis, I state as follows:
 - Council, on 16 March 2011, submitted a 1st claim for Counter Disaster Operations, 1st claim for emergent works and a 1st submission for \$19.8M of infrastructure damage to the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) for the works defined in Question 6 above. Council has approval from QRA for most of these submissions and has commenced its reconstruction efforts.
 - A 2nd submission for road damage that occurred after the lifting of the load limits is almost completed. The value of this submission is estimated to be \$10M and will be lodged with the Queensland Reconstruction Authority within two weeks. A 2nd and final claim for Emergent Works has also been submitted.
 - The Director Technical Services has estimated that about \$30-40M of damage to council's road network was avoided by the load limiting exercise. The load limiting exercise allowed the road network to be made operational much quicker.



- Council did experience problems with enforcement of the load limits and road closures
 as the various pieces of legislation do not allow easy enforcement and the issuing of on
 the spot fines by Council. This is a matter that needs to be pursued.
- A full copy of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority Submission is provided electronically on disc. A summary of the 1st submission for reconstruction is shown below as currently approved by QRA. This table was provided to Council by Program Manager, QRA on 2nd Sept 2011:

	Submission Amount	Approved Value	Under Investigation Value	Not Eligible Value	Date Approved
NBRC.3.11 water and sewerage	\$2,143,739.50	\$1,820,739.50	\$0.00	\$115,000.00	17/05/2011
NBRC.13.11 Mt Perry roads	\$381,479.31	\$170,398.32	\$211,080.99	\$0.00	18/05/2011
NBRC.1.11 Emergent works	\$438,253.49	\$438,253.49	\$0.00	\$0.00	19/05/2011
NBRC.9.11 Monto	\$4,721,479.95	\$2,432,486.90	\$2,288,993.05	\$0.00	26/05/2011
NBRC.5.11 public areas and buildings	\$504,213.86	\$504,213.86	\$0.00	\$0.00	16/06/2011
NBRC.8.11 Mundubbera roads	\$4,007,154.88	\$4,007,154.88	\$0.00	\$0.00	22/06/2011
NBRC,11,11 Gayndah roads	\$3,107,674.44	\$3,107,674.44	\$0.00	\$0.00	19/07/2011
NBRC.12.11 Biggenden roads	\$2,130,488.83	\$2,130,488.83	\$0.00	\$0.00	30/08/2011
NBRC,4.11 Eidsvold roads	\$1,030,077.43	\$1,030,077.43	\$0.00	\$0.00	31/08/2011
NBRC.7.11 Buildings	\$196,505.00	\$0.00	\$196,505.00	\$0.00	31/08/2011

- Evidence of the damage are contained in a number of Council documents including photo library of damaged assets, GIS layers detailing locations of damaged assets and correspondence to various government agencies outlining the impact of the floods on public assets.
- Evidence is included within Council's submissions to the Queensland Reconstruction
 Authority for the reconstruction of damaged assets, including a detailed submission for
 increased community resilience and other documents provided to demonstrate the
 impact on public assets. A full copy of the first submission is provided on a disc.
- Evidence for the 2nd Submission will be provided to QRA as part of Council's submission details.
- Council is reconstructing damaged assets using a wide range of contractors to undertake the work with support from Council staff and supervisors.

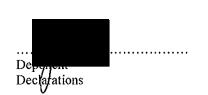


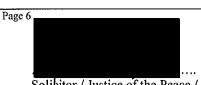


- A number of projects required detailed designs prior to the reconstruction of those assets (raw water intakes, large landslips onto road pavements, bridge replacement and the likes). The designs have commenced with a range of specialist consultants.
- Council has estimated that it will spend approximately \$1.5M per month on the reconstruction of assets for about 8 months per year and between \$0.5-1.0M per month during the wet season in order to complete the reconstruction of damaged assets within the two year timeframe.
- Details of the full program for the reconstruction effort are difficult to provide due to changing weather conditions. However the current program for a month in advance is shown on Council's webpage www.northburnett.qld.gov.au. Monthly reports are provided to Council on progress of the reconstruction of damaged assets. Council has agreed on a reporting process with QRA in order to provide a two weekly update (progress report) and claim (with globally positioned evidence) to QRA.

Funding arrangements for repairs to damaged council infrastructure

- 8. In relation to the Council infrastructure that was damaged:
 - Please refer to approved funding from Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) as detailed in question 7 above for Council's 1st submission. It is anticipated that Council's 2nd and final submission will be treated with the same respect that the 1st submission approvals received from QRA. As such, Council expects to receive approximately \$30M from QRA to reconstruct damaged assets.
 - Part of the above submission, inclusive of Council's Emergent Works Claims and Counter Disaster Claims, included approval to spend \$1.0M of normal day labour on the recovery process. Council has spent this allowance and will make a claim to QRA within two weeks for the total \$1.0M.
 - Council will incur supervision and other staffing costs which it will have to fund from its operational budget. These costs are not claimable from QRA but are incurred to supervise contractors, prepare and manage tenders and contracts, update asset and financial systems and the likes. This cost is likely to be in the order of \$2.5M over two years.
 - The approved funding will allow Council to return the assets to the previous construction standard. Betterment of the assets has not been approved with the above projects.
 - Council has submitted a separate program of resilience and betterment projects to QRA for their consideration. Council has not been advised of any consideration of those projects (by QRA) at the time of writing this statement.





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Policies or other documents which require property owners to have an evacuation plan and/or route in the case of flooding

9. There are no Council policies or other documents which require property owners to have an evacuation plan and/or route in the case of flooding. Council has worked with State Government agencies and relied upon State Government produced material.

Sworn by Mark John Patrick Pitt at Gayndah this	12 th day of September 2011 in the presence of:
Deponent/	Solicitor / Justice of the Peace / Comm. Dec.
	Solicitor / Justice of the Feace / Collini. Dec.

Deponent Solicitor / Justice of the Peace / Commissioner for Declarations

DODE INFO REPORT. Final Report on the Inland Flooding Study

File:

Responsible Officer: Bob Savage - Director of Development & Environment

Report prepared by: Bob Savage - Director of Development & Environment

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide councillors with a copy of the Final Report on the Inland Flooding Study undertaken as a joint project of LGAQ, Department of Environment & Resource Management and Department of Infrastructure & Planning.

2 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

The study was undertaken in response to an approach from North Burnett Regional council to LGAQ in regard to the climate change sector referred to in Gayndah's Flood Study. The project team has worked closely with Council officers in undertaking the study.

3 CORPORATE/OPERATIONAL PLAN

Outcome 2 - 2.4 Land Use Planning – Ensure there is an availability of appropriate land to support industry and residential development, whilst still maintaining quality rural land.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The study will be used in conjunction with Council's Planning Scheme.

5 STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Sustainable Planning Act 2009

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

7 RISK MANAGEMENT

The study will be taken into consideration in the development of Councils Planning Scheme to mitigate the risks of future development being impacted on by significant flood events.

8 CONSULTATION

The study was undertaken in consultation between NBRC, LGAQ, DERM, DIP and other state agencies.

9 OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

N/A - Information only at this stage

10 OFFICER'S COMMENTS/CONCLUSION

Reports are provided for Councillors information. Council officers are reviewing the reports findings and recommendations and undertaking a "Sanity Check".

Any proposed policy position will be presented to and discussed with Council when appropriate.

11 ATTACHMENTS

- Final Report on the Inland Flooding Study Increasing Queensland's resilience to inland flooding in a changing climate.
- Policy options for incorporating climate change into the flood risk management framework in Gayndah (North Burnett Regional Council)
- III. Final Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) report Derivation of a rainfall intensity figure to inform an effective interim policy approach to managing inland flooding risks in a changing climate