

Living with Floods in Queensland

The Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry (Snapshot of Qld planning and implementation needs)

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 Foresight

Government
Office for Science



Establishment of the Inquiry

- Established on Monday 17 January 2011 under the *Commissions of Inquiry Act 1950*
- Independent body powers of a royal commission:
 - summon witnesses
 - require documents to be produced
 - issue search warrants

Purpose of the Inquiry

Terms of reference (ToR; a-g) required investigation and public reporting on:

- preparation and planning for the floods by governments, agencies and the community
- the adequacy of the response to the floods
- management of essential services
- the adequacy of forecasts and early warning systems
- insurers' performance of their responsibilities
- the operation of dams and release strategies
- land use planning (item g)

Purpose of the Inquiry

- g) All aspects of land use planning through local and regional planning systems to minimise infrastructure and property impacts from floods

- h) In undertaking its inquiries, the Commission is required to:
 - Take account the regional and geographic differences across affected communities
 - Seek public submissions and hold public hearings in affected communities

ToR required two reports:

1. Interim Report delivered on 1 August 2011 in advance of flood season
2. Final report delivered on 16 March 2012

The Inquiry

- More than 700 written submissions
- Community meetings 16 locations in central, southern and western Queensland
- Statements and documents requested from members of the public, experts, public servants and members of non-government organisations
- Three rounds of public hearings in affected areas (streamed live to the web and on foxtel)
 - Flood preparedness (in advance of next wet season and in preparation of Interim Report)
 - Land-use planning and insurance
 - Dam management

Reports, transcripts from hearings, statements and exhibits, submissions and entities granted leave to appear all available on the Commission website www.floodcommission.qld.gov.au

Department involvement

- **Submissions**

- How the department was involved in initiatives relating to the preparedness and response to the 2010 – 2011 flood events (27 pages + attachments)
- The role of planning, the operation of state and local planning instruments and the Queensland Development Code, and the role of the former Office of Local Government (now Department of Local Government) on funding assistance available for LGs (51 pages + attachments)

- **Requirements**

- DLGP responded to 4x more requirements than any other department for the 2nd round of hearings
- Multiple statements from the Government Planner and Building Codes Queensland (who both appeared during hearings) about the role of planning and building policies and legislation
- Documents and information from the department about planning schemes, SPP1/03, local laws etc
- Statements from the current and former Ministers regarding decisions they made about development or policies

Interim Report

- 175 recommendations, most relating to emergency response, dam management and evacuation
- Department led one recommendation:
Recommendation 4.12:
“The Queensland Government should consider assisting less well-resourced councils to fund the installation of an ALERT system where a case is made for its adoption”
- The government prioritised \$5 million of the funding for the Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program 2011-2012 towards the purchase of:
 - Flood warning systems (e.g. sirens, ALERT and SMS warnings)
 - Flood and rainfall gauges
 - Monitoring equipment etc

Final Report

- 177 recommendations covering a broad range of matters
- 123 directly related to the State Government, 56 related to local governments, eight relate to the Commonwealth Government and seven relate to private entities (noting that there are overlapping responsibilities for a number of recommendations)
- The Premier delivered its formal response to the final report on 7 June 2012. The Premier stated that the “Government will fully implement everything it is responsible for, and work in cooperation with Local Councils to deliver improved flood outcomes across the State”

Types of Recommendations

7.16: “The Queensland Government should consider drafting assessment criteria to be included in the model flood planning controls which require that works in a floodplain:

- Do not reduce on-site flood storage capacity
- Counteract any changes the works will cause to flood behaviour of all floods up to and including the applicable defined flood event by measures taken within the subject site (for example, use of compensatory works, detention basins and other engineering mechanisms)
- Do not change the flood characteristics outside the subject site in ways that result in:
 - Loss of flood storage
 - Loss of/changes to flow paths
 - Acceleration or retardation of flows, or
 - Any reduction in flood warning times elsewhere on the floodplain”

7.19: “Levees should be regulated”

Governance

- The Queensland Government has put in place an implementation framework that clearly identifies key areas of work and allocates clear lines of responsibility to ensure implementation
- Implementation groups have been established to deliver the Commission's recommendations along five key streams of delivery:
 1. Planning (Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning)
 2. Building (Department of Housing and Public Works)
 3. Environment and Mines (Department of Environment and Heritage Protection)
 4. Emergency Management (Department of Community Safety)
 5. Dams (Department of Energy and Water Supply)

Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry implementation

Membership and work program

