



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

Office of the Lord Mayor and Chief Executive Officer
Chief Executive's Office
Level 23, 266 George Street Brisbane
GPO Box 1434 Brisbane Qld 4001
T 07 3403 8888 F 07 3334 0043
www.brisbane.qld.gov.au

18 April 2013

Ms Sophie Dunstone
Committee Secretary
Environment and Communications References Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Ms Dunstone

I refer to the public hearing held on 22 February 2013 at Queensland Parliament House in relation to the inquiry by the Senate Environment and Communications References Committee into recent trends and preparedness for extreme weather events. Brisbane City Council was represented by Mr Jason Cameron, Manager, Disaster Operations Branch.

Mr Cameron spoke to questions and matters relating to Brisbane City Council's recent submission to the Committee and his area of expertise in Disaster Response. There were a number of questions and/or comments which were asked on a number of topics, which were taken on notice.

Please find attached Brisbane City Council's responses to Questions Taken on Notice (Attachment 1).

We trust the attached response meets the requirements of the Environment and Communications References Committee.

Yours sincerely

Colin Jensen
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

Federal Senate's Environmental and Communications Reference Committee – Public Hearing - 22 February 2013
Hansard Questions on Notice

Senator	Questions on Notice	Brisbane City Council Response
<p>Senator Bilyk</p>	<p>One of the other submissions, I think it was that of the Insurance Council of Australia, says:</p> <p>...when considering extreme weather preparedness in Australia, primary efforts should be focussed on measures aimed at reducing the brittleness of the built environment ...</p> <p>They go on to say further along: ...whilst the community cannot control extreme weather hazard, it can exert significant power over its exposure and vulnerability through appropriate regulation and development practice.</p> <p>I am wondering if you can make some comment about that comment about the role of local government and councils.</p>	<p>It is important to build resilience to natural hazards into the built environment. Land use planning strategies at a strategic, neighbourhood and site based level can all play an important role in this process.</p> <p>Such land use strategies can contribute to resilience in the built environment. However, where the risk of property damage has to be balanced against personal safety, then personal safety is paramount.</p> <p>In terms of the regulation of development, Council's role is to allocate land for various uses and plan for how land should be developed.</p> <p>Council has developed a Flood Overlay Code as part of the draft new City Plan. The Code is aligned with Brisbane's FloodSmart Future Strategy and applies only to new development including extensions to, or re-builds of, existing properties.</p> <p>There is a key role for the State Government in developing and maintaining appropriate building standards for buildings in flood risk areas. New (non-mandatory) parts of the Queensland Development Code have been introduced and are under consideration by Council as future development standards in flood affected areas.</p> <p>Urban planning is one of the most effective means of addressing of flooding and through the Flood Code in the draft new City Plan, will ensure that future development contributes to creating a safe and flood resilient city. As these planning rules only apply to new development, Brisbane must continue to adapt to living on a floodplain through an integrated, co-ordinated approach to flood risk management.</p>

		<p>Brisbane's FloodSmart Future Strategy does this by co-ordinating four flood risk management tools; infrastructure, information and awareness raising, emergency management and land use planning and development control. Following public consultation, this strategy was adopted by the Brisbane City Council on 12 March 2013.</p>
<p>Senator Waters</p>	<p>Council purchased back some homes in high-flood-risk areas, which I am pleased to hear. (Voluntary Home Purchase Scheme)</p> <p>Can you tell me if there are any changes to planning schemes or other requirements around the rebuilding of homes?</p>	<p>Council has made significant amendments to the planning scheme following recent flooding. Particularly in relation to the rebuilding of homes.</p> <p>The Temporary Local Planning Instrument (TLPI) 01/11 - Brisbane Interim Flood Response was introduced on 16 May 2011 and is currently planned to be in effect until the provisions through the Flood Overlay Code through the new City Plan is formally adopted.</p> <p>The TLPI is an interim response that was put in place quickly to prevail over the planning provisions in Brisbane City Plan 2000 for flood affected sites. It provides guidance and confidence for those residents building or rebuilding after flooding, while enabling longer term planning provisions to be developed.</p> <p>The TLPI applies to the land affected by the January 2011 Brisbane River flooding as well as by waterway or creek flooding.</p> <p>The new planning provisions introduced by the TLPI:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes an Interim Residential Flood Level (IRFL) which will require building levels to be increased; • allows building heights to increase in response to the IRFL; • requires the location of essential services (electricity supply; telecommunications, fire services) to be either higher than the IRFL or sufficiently waterproofed; • states filling and retaining walls must not create local drainage problems or cause amenity issues; and • determines instances where resilient building materials will have to be used in developments. <p>Council's planning regulations have always included planning provisions to manage flood susceptibility. Over time our understanding of flooding has increased and a new Flood Overlay Code has been developed to provide long term guidance on how Council intends to manage new development in Brisbane.</p> <p>The Flood Overlay Code will guide the future development of sites through the newly</p>

		<p>defined Flood Planning Areas (FPAs) shown on flood overlay maps. Council has developed five FPAs for Brisbane River and creek flooding to guide future building and development.</p> <p>The FPAs are a combination of frequency of flooding, and/or the flood depth and/or the speed at which flood water is travelling. And development regulations are tailored to each FPA.</p>
<p>Senator Ruston</p>	<p>I notice in your submission that you say that, of the \$11.87 million, you actually spent \$10 million purchasing houses in high-risk flood areas.</p> <p>Do the council, as part of the strategy for dealing with these events, believe that they have a role in educating people about minimising the risk that they put themselves at in terms of what they do, where they live and where they build things? In addition to that, do the council now take the view that they are not going to give building approval to people who want to build things in places that are likely to be at high risk?</p> <p>I mean, \$10 million to buy someone's house seems to me like an interesting way of spending \$10 million.</p>	<p>Council has an integrated plan for flood risk management, the Brisbane's FloodSmart Future Strategy. The strategy supports our sustainable economic growth and continues to improve the flood resilience of our city. The Strategy recognises that for Brisbane to better adapt to living on a floodplain, it must adopt an integrated approach to flood risk management addressing infrastructure, information and awareness raising, emergency management, and land use planning and development control.</p> <p>Brisbane City Council utilises an all hazards, holistic and comprehensive approach to disaster management, using the guiding principles of disaster management being Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery (PPRR).</p> <p>Council is committed to assisting Brisbane residents to more prepared and therefore more resilient to all hazards including flooding. Council has numerous flood preparedness tools which are free and available for Brisbane residents to identify their flood risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's FloodWise Property Report provides address specific flood information including sources of flooding and building and development requirements. • Council's Flood Flag maps are available for residents to identify if they are potentially impacted by flooding and the source of flooding • Council's SevereWeather Early Warning Alert service is a free service available to all Brisbane residents. The alert service provides SMS, email and/or voice message to landline early warning to residents if identified that their property may be at threat of severe weather; and • Council's Creek Flood Early Warning Alert Service is available to 13 creek flood prone areas of the City. It is a free service which provides early warning alerts via SMS, email and/or voice mail to land to notify residents of impending creek flooding. <p>These tools and further information is available on Council's 'be prepared' web page: www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/beprepared. Council's web site also provides advice and guidance on preparedness activities and actions residents should undertake to increase their flood preparedness levels.</p>

		<p>Each year Council implements an summer storm season campaign called Brisbane Ready for Summer. This aim of this campaign is to raise awareness of potential weather events during Brisbane's summer storm season and encourage residents to understand their flood risks and to be prepared. In recent years Council has partnered with Energex to promote preparedness and awareness of the potential threats of Brisbane's summer storm season.</p>
<p>Senator Waters</p>	<p>What is the council doing to reduce its own greenhouse gas emissions, given obviously that climate change is driving these extreme weather events, and what is it doing to encourage Brisbanites to do the same?</p>	<p>Council's actions are premised on the view that regardless of whether or not climate change is a driving force, it makes sense to manage pollution and reduce our impact on the environment. To this end Council recognises the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions over time. Our Shared Vision: Living in Brisbane 2026 target is that Brisbane City Council will be carbon neutral by 2026. Council has implemented a broad range of initiatives to achieve this goal, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of Council's electricity is purchased from GreenPower sources. Brisbane City Council is currently one of Australia's largest GreenPower purchasers. • Purchasing carbon offsets to cover fuel used in all vehicles in Council's passenger fleet as well as buses and ferries. • Planting more than 2 million trees. • Council has targets for reducing the emissions intensity (emissions per kilometre travelled) for each class of vehicle in its fleet. Council currently has over 50 hybrid passenger cars and a small number of electric vehicles in its fleet. • Council has taken action to reduce the amount of emissions from its landfill sites. Currently approximately 32,000 MWh of green energy is produced from the Rochdale landfill, which abates approximately 140,000 tonnes of CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent). • Council is about to undertake retrofits of 25,000 streetlights across Brisbane. This is expected to reduce Council's electricity use by 2.5% and is equivalent to a reduction in emissions of 2,100 tonnes of CO₂ per year. • Council delivers a range of initiatives to empower Brisbane residents, schools and community groups to adopt environmentally sustainable lifestyle practices. Many of these initiatives are delivered through Council's Green Heart environmental outreach program. They include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Heart Events program to inspire the community to adopt sustainable lifestyles through festivals and workshops, • information and communication provided to residents through its Green Heart Homes program to support households in reducing their carbon footprint and adopting sustainable lifestyles,

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • education and leadership programs for students and schools through the Green Heart Schools program, • partnerships with a range of external organisations to support community initiatives, and • environmental grants to provide financial support for community groups.
Senator Waters	<p>I heard in the media a couple of weeks back—in fact, I saw the press release—that the state government has now changed the rules about mandatory water tanks in new homes, making them not mandatory anymore. I think I recall that there was a line saying that councils could still require that if they so wished.</p> <p>If I am correct about that, is Brisbane City Council going to continue to require rainwater tanks when new homes are built?</p>	The State Government has amended legislation, Council is yet to finalise its position on this matter.
Senator Waters	<p>Clearly it was an enormous clean-up effort, and well done to council for the role that it played in doing that. I am interested in how much that cost.</p> <p>Did the \$400 million include private damages as well, or was that \$400 million the impact on council's budget?</p>	Approximately \$400 million which did not include cost of damage to private property; it was Council's flood recovery cost.
Senator Cameron	<p>Regarding the submission from Centre for Disaster Studies, there are a number of issues that this submission raises in relation to local government.</p> <p>One of the issues is: Local government councils should be responsible for the development of a</p>	Council is committed to developing comprehensive floodplain management plans and has commenced this work.

	<p>floodplain management plan.</p> <p>Is that being done by the Brisbane City Council?</p>	
Senator Cameron	<p>There were a range of recommendations, but the other one was: Comprehensive flood studies must take into account the likely impacts of climate change on future floods.</p>	<p>Brisbane City Council has developed a program of work to undertake flood studies for Brisbane's urbanised catchments. These flood studies consider climate change impacts as per the recommendations of the final report of the Queensland Government Inland Flooding Study.</p>
Senator Cameron	<p>Explain how the various departments within council deal with a coordinated approach to flooding?</p>	<p>Council aims to deliver a 'One Council' approach. Disaster Operations take an overarching strategic role to ensure that all Council flood related initiatives are delivered in a holistic and complementary manner to the community. Internal stakeholder engagement forms the basis of communication and direction. Council is currently developing an All Hazards Disaster Management Strategy to define the 'all hazards', comprehensive and holistic approach to disaster management and this document will assist in the coordination and delivery of initiatives in the Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery phases.</p> <p>External engagement in the form of regular meetings, exercises, forums and /or development of formal Memorandum of Understanding documents with commercial entities and emergency management and non-government agencies has been successful in delivering partnerships opportunities and achieving common outcomes. Examples of current partnerships include Energex, Red Cross, Zhu Chi, GOA Billboards, Brisbane Airport Corporation and Queensland Surf Life Saving.</p>
Senator Cameron	<p>Given that there are other lead officers in council who deal with a range of issues, could I ask you to have a look at submission 82, which is the Professor David King submission. It is the one for disaster studies. Could you look at the issues raised in it that relate to the Brisbane City Council. These go to <u>insurance issues, mitigation issues, planning issues and response issues</u>. It is a very comprehensive report. I could go through it and ask you point by point, but it might be easier to ask you to have a look at it. It raised issues in a</p>	<p>Post the January 2011 River Flood Event, Council undertook its own internal review to determine opportunities to further improve Council's disaster management of emergency events. Council has committed to undertake all of these recommendations, in conjunction with the all recommendations from the Queensland Commission of Inquiry. From the 177 recommendations, to date 146 have been implemented with the balance to be implemented post June 2016.</p> <p>Brisbane City Council utilises an all hazards, holistic and comprehensive approach to disaster management, using the guiding principles of disaster management being Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery (PPRR).</p> <p>In relation to the Preparedness phase of disaster management, Council has numerous existing preparedness tools and initiatives to assist the community to be aware of potential hazardous risks and undertake preparation activities in an effort to create a more resilient</p>

		<p>speedy and efficient recovery in these areas.</p> <p>Brisbane City Council works closely with the District Disaster Management Group and State Disaster Management Group to ensure consistency in both the Response and Recovery phases of disaster management.</p>
<p>Senator Waters</p>	<p>You mentioned in your submission that, after the 2011 floods, council commissioned an internal flood response review board to recommend improvements. It seems quite a number of those improvements were recommended. There is probably not time for you to go through all 177.</p> <p>Can you give us some highlights of what were the key improvements recommended?</p>	<p>The highlights of the key recommendations from Council's January 2011 Flood Action Plan covered areas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event preparedness including continual delivery of individual and team training along with LDCC training and exercising of disaster management plans. Council also examined and developed a range and variety of early warning systems and alert messages. • Public awareness and communication including the implementation of the use of Defined Flood Level terminology in critical documents, the use of social media and providing more localised information regarding inundation and flood level forecasts through a range of media channels. • Flood studies such as being part of a State Government led project to complete a Flood Risk Management analysis and modelling work across a range of full supply levels, operating strategies and flood events. • Floodplain management plans including the development of a flood risk management strategy and prioritisation of a schedule for delivery of creek floodplain management plans. • Flood planning and development assessment processes including developing an approach for flood overlay mapping, adopting a new flood code and setting out requirements for development applications. • Flood mitigation measures including the installation of devices to prevent backflow from river flooding.

<p>Senator Waters</p>	<p>Were there any other internal reviews commissioned that focused on prevention or mitigation as well as just the response capability?</p>	<p>The Lord Mayor of Brisbane on 21 January 2011 appointed a Board of Enquiry to review the response to the flood event in Brisbane. The review was to provide Council with an external independent assessment of its flood preparedness and disaster responses to assist in achieving best practice standards in the future.</p> <p>Particular sections of the review dealt with the effectiveness of Council's disaster management arrangements, the response to the flood event, the impact of existing planning regulations in flood affected areas and the effectiveness of flood prevention and stormwater infrastructure.</p>
-----------------------	---	--