



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

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



Dear Ms Dunstone

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments relating to the inquiry into recent trends in and preparedness for extreme weather events for the Environment and Communications References Committee.

Brisbane City Council manages a range of emergency events, both natural and man-made. In recent years we have responded to the January 2011 Flood, numerous wildfire incidents, localised flooding and most recently, heatwave.

As per the *Disaster Management Act 2003* (Qld), Council has an All Hazards Disaster Management Plan which is reviewed and tested annually and includes comprehensive Disaster Management arrangements for specific events. The Disaster Management Plan is supported by best practice incident management through Brisbane's Incident Management System (BIMS). During the January 2011 Flood these arrangements provided the framework for an efficient and effective emergency response.

When required, Council's Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC) is activated in the event of a significant emergency response. The LDCC is the coordination hub and ensures a coordinated Council and inter-agency response for the City. Relevant Liaison Officers from external agencies are present within the LDCC to ensure communication is seamless and support is provided and coordinated.

Council's engagement and communication with key providers of emergency services, major infrastructure, construction, community and health services is supported through the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG), which is activated in response to a high level emergency event. The group is chaired by the Lord Mayor and is tested and exercised a number of times a year. The group consists of senior representatives from all relevant stakeholders and meets regularly during an event to ensure that strategic response and recovery initiatives are delivered for the community.

Council's efficient and effective disaster management arrangements were successfully executed in response to the January 2011 Flood. This major disaster event resulted in approximately \$400M in damages. The damages incurred included major infrastructure and homes, along with significant economic, environmental and social impacts. Council has been able to achieve significant repairs since the January 2011 Flood, including 23 ferry terminals, cleansing 465.3km of stormwater drainage and removing 27,898 kilometres of sludge, resurfacing 145,659m² of road and ensuring the structural integrity of 17 bridges. Council is currently undertaking the tender process for the rebuilding of the New Farm Riverwalk.

To efficiently manage the recovery phase of the event, Council established and coordinated six Recovery Committees: Community, Economic, Environmental, Infrastructure and Planning and Ward Recovery, also known as the Lord Mayors Recovery Task Group (LMRTG). The LMRTG delivered \$11.83M in recovery packages, distributed \$1.12M to community facilities and allocated \$10M in purchasing homes in high risk flood areas of Brisbane.

After the January 2011 Flood, Council commissioned an internal Flood Response Review Board to recommend potential improvements to Council's response capability. These recommendations, in conjunction with the Queensland Commission of Inquiry recommendations were collated to form an Action Plan. 177 recommendations for improvement were identified and Council has implemented more than 80% to date. This Action Plan is available on Council's Corporate Website: http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/downloads/community/community_safety/flood_action_plan_jan_2011.pdf

Queensland's Disaster Management arrangements, which are based on the *Disaster Management Act 2003* (Qld) have a proven history of providing efficient response and recovery for a multitude of emergency events including cyclones and flooding.

Consistent nationwide disaster and emergency management legislation would provide increased opportunities for interoperability and support between States and Territories across Australia. Consistency in the areas of responsibility, terminology, naming conventions, funding, and strategic program arrangements would further assist local areas in enhancing preparedness and achieving greater community resilience.

Yours sincerely

Colin Jensen
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER