



16 November 2016

Mr Mike Blake
Review Investigator
Government Flood review
Department of Premier & Cabinet
GPO Box 308
HOBART Tas 7001

Dear Mr Blake

Re: Flood Review Submission

Council would like to make the following observations, via dot points, relating to the recent June flood event at Ouse and the flood at Bothwell in September:

Public Education/Awareness

- Concentrated effort via media (social, television, radio, print) alerting people to the possibility and dangers of flooding, first response activities, produce/evaluate/review household flood management plans. As people are generally aware of having bushfire management plans, floods should be treated in the same manner.
- Community members encouraged as part of this to review their current insurance policies and be aware of current information available from the TasAlert website.
- Encouraging community members to share information between themselves and their networks to ensure that all members of the community are informed.
- Forum held at the Ouse Country Club incredibly well received and useful. Perhaps these could be held on a regular basis rather than waiting for the crisis to occur.

Public Authority Awareness

- Councils to hold information relevant to their particular community i.e. information re water levels, travel time of flood waters, landowners along individual rivers/waterways, appropriate evacuation measures (emergency management plans) etc.
- Council to be a distributor of relevant information at all times, not just at the time of the emergency event.

Administration & Works & Services
Tarleton Street
Hamilton, Tasmania 7140
Tel: (03) 6286 3202
Fax: (03) 6286 3334

Development & Environmental Services
Alexander Street
Bothwell, Tasmania 7030
Tel: (03) 6259 5503
Fax: (03) 6259 5722

website www.centralhighlands.tas.gov.au

Communication

- Pamphlet as per the bushfire pamphlet – recently distributed via the Mercury in the South proved to be an effective medium. Suggestion that a similar pamphlet related to floods be produced and distributed.
- Suggestion that a database containing names and contact numbers of landowners situated along rivers be developed and distributed to enable landowners to alert each other and relevant authorities of activities including rainfall, rising river levels so that pre-emptive action may be taken.

Contributing Factors

- Scientific evidence suggests choking of the waterways with non-native species of plants i.e. willows, blackberries etc. contributes to the level and intensity of floods.
- NRM South (or like organisation) could be an appropriate agency in which to invest ownership, physical and financial resources on an ongoing sustainable basis to ensure that waterways are cleared, monitored and managed.

Transition Effectiveness

- Query the relevance of the eligibility criteria used by Federal and State Governments to ascertain the level of assistance to flood affected areas.
- Suggestion that perhaps State Government could have funding reserved to assist small rural, regional councils (low population/large geographical area) who do not initially meet the Federal Government criteria. This would certainly alleviate the level of stress and anxiety that was evident at the time of the June floods. When facing tragic events, to be told that you are ineligible for assistance because you do not meet a criteria that you don't even know exists, is extremely distressing.
- Greater flexibility re allocation of funds to flood affected areas and people – too much red tape, decision makers too far removed from the affected area, lack of local knowledge, context and empathy from people at the other end of the telephone when seeking assistance and guidance.
- Relevance of the eligibility criteria for reimbursement of funds to councils affected i.e. when the works program is redirected to rectify urgent flood damage issues putting the existing works program well behind schedule, councils are not reimbursed for the impost of this delay in the works schedule. Councils cannot claim for using their own workforce to complete these urgent repairs during normal working hours, when in

actual fact it is a huge cost to Council as the existing works schedule is interrupted and even delayed to the next year due to budget constraints.

- Further to the above point, using contractors in our area is not an option as they do not exist.
- Flood repair work has to be done urgently as it is often crucial infrastructure that has to be dealt with – we do not have the luxury of time, and safety of our community members and travelling public is paramount.

These observations are based on Council's experience and feedback from community members. If you require further information or clarification please feel free to Contact Council.

Yours faithfully



Lyn Eyles
GENERAL MANAGER