

Our Ref: 4-1-5-1 – AMD01913

Your Ref:



21 August 2014

Productivity Commission
GPO Box 1428
CANBERRA CITY ACT 2601

Dear Sir/Madam

On behalf of council, I write to you expressing serious concern regarding reports that changes may be made to the National Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA). The NDRRA program has been essential to the economic survival of the Gympie region. This region has suffered enormously from flooding in recent years and the local community could not possibly afford to fund the extent of road and bridge repair required if another flood was to occur, without assistance from NDRRA.

The flooding in the period 2011/2013 caused \$65m damage to council infrastructure in the Gympie region, primarily to rural roads and bridges. The rural road network cannot realistically be relocated due to cost and practicality issues. The rivers cannot be redirected, especially when rivers such as the Mary River rise up to 25m. Fortunately, large floods are infrequent and the 2011/13 sequence of events is unparalleled in recorded history.

In the event that funding was not available from NDRRA for road repair, another flood would mean rural connectivity would suffer for several years, if not decades. This would have an enormous impact on local families and farm production. Agriculture and forestry in this region contributes approximately \$200m each year on average to the economy.

NDRRA does not cover all costs. It is easily overlooked that NDRRA only covers certain types of damage in certain events. Councils still have to find significant funding for all other situations.

Disasters do not happen by choice and their impact can be felt nationally. It is extremely difficult to plan for extreme events. Councils and governments have worked hard to get to where we are now in relation to the NDRRA arrangements and changes could represent a financial disaster for many councils such as Gympie.

Yours sincerely

Cr Ron Dyne
Mayor