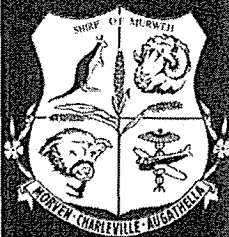


MURWEH SHIRE COUNCIL

95-101 Alfred Street, Charleville
A.B.N. 98 117 909 303



14 October 2014

YOUR REF:

IN REPLY CONTACT: Neil Polglase

RESPONDS TO:

OUR REF:

NWP:nwp/:

Hub of the South West

Natural Disaster Funding Arrangements
Productivity Commission
LB2 Collins Street East
Melbourne Vic 8003
Via Email: disaster.funding@pc.gov.au

Dear Commissioner,

ADDRESS ALL
COMMUNICATIONS
TO:
THE CHIEF
EXECUTIVE
OFFICER

SUBMISSION TO PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION INQUIRY INTO NATURAL DISASTER RELIEF ARRANGEMENTS

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Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Productivity Inquiry into Natural Disaster Relief Arrangements. The following comments are provided for consideration by the Commission.

The reforms as contained within the above submission implies a desire to reform the Natural Disaster Relief arrangements, clearly shifting the responsibility of recovery from natural disasters from the Federal Government to State and Local Governments, businesses and individuals. Given the number and severity of the natural disasters experienced by Murweh Shire from the catastrophic event in 1990 through to 2012 these reforms would no doubt be calamitous for our shire.

Council has experienced no fewer than eight events in this time and are fully supportive of the past and current arrangements for response and recovery from natural disasters.

Given the location of our shire being a rural and remote shire in the far south west region of Queensland, Council has experienced a number of smaller isolated flood events necessitating the need to seek NDRRA assistance to recover from such events. Should the **trigger point threshold as proposed shift from \$240,000 to \$2M** a number of these events would now see Council meeting the full cost. Having only a small rate base with the inability to increase revenues from outside sources, this Council relies on the support from Federal and State Governments and any increase from the current arrangements would severely hamper our ability to maintain and retain essential services let alone improving the quality of life for our community.

The recommendation to **increase the annual mitigation expenditure gradually to \$200M** is most welcome, however the offset against recovery is disconcerting given that this may lead to the States not being able to provide appropriate funding in subsequent events to enable communities to fully recover.



Council in partnership with the Federal and State Governments has actively promoted the implementation of appropriate mitigation strategies from flooding including the provision of the Charleville and Augathella Levees at a cost of around \$12M and the provision of Bradleys Gully diversion at cost of \$14M. Whilst not providing complete flood proofing, it was no more evidenced than in the 2012 flooding of the Warrego River when only 32 homes were inundated whilst in 1990 some 1400 homes were inundated. (see attached pictorial)

Further additional funding has also been received to increase the number of warning systems on both the Warrego River and Bradleys Gully and to enable council to implement a new EMS (emergency management system) to allow Council to be proactive in responding to any potential threat in advance. It is hoped that this funding will continue into the future.

In the 2010 flooding event a number of Council's community assets were severely impacted most notably our town halls, libraries, medical centre etc. Council has been negotiating with our insurers to increase our flood threshold from \$250,000 to \$1M but to date have been unsuccessful. Council again welcomes **any investigation into increased insurance opportunities** however will need to address appropriate infrastructure (community assets) as the premiums (more likely be sourced off shore possibly Lloyds of London) required to cover all assets would most definitely be out of reach of most Councils.

Whilst Council will not make an individual submission with respect to the '**value for money**' principles of the NDRRA, Council is aware that the **LGAQ** (Local Government Association of Queensland) and **QRA** (Queensland Reconstruction Authority) have provided an in-depth assessment of the benefits in retaining the ability for local Governments to undertake recovery works through the use of day labour, in their submissions. As such Council fully endorses these submissions and all submissions from Queensland Councils strengthening the case for the continuance of this worthwhile provision.

Yours faithfully,

Neil Póglase
Chief Executive Officer