



14 August 2008
In reply please quote: Item 21

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The Hon. Neil Roberts
Minister for Emergency Services
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Dear Minister

Re: Flood Mitigation Program

At the annual conference of the Urban Local Government Association of Queensland held recently in Gympie members resolved that representations be made to the State Government to lobby the Commonwealth Government to re-establish a separate, stand alone, Commonwealth Flood Mitigation Program.

When the Regional Flood Mitigation Program (RFMP) was "rolled into" the Natural Disaster Mitigation Program (NDMP) by the Commonwealth Government, local government authorities understood that all natural disaster programs were to be "rolled into" the NDMP. However, in April 2007 the Commonwealth Government announced the continuation (for a further 5 years) and extension (of funding) of the only other separate, stand alone natural disaster mitigation program, the Bushfire Mitigation Program.

Whilst climate change predictions of increased extreme weather, with respect to drought have been readily adopted and acted upon by Governments (eg with increased provisions for Bushfire Mitigation), the predicted effects, of more frequent, large extremes of weather for rainfall appear to have not been fully understood.

Overall our communities are facing increasing costs due to flooding both from local, flash, and riverine flooding exacerbated in certain circumstances by rising sea levels and higher coastal surges. The need to adopt a meaningful program to mitigate flood loss is now essential.

ULGA is seeking the State Government's assistance with the re-establishment of a separate, stand alone Commonwealth Flood Mitigation Program based upon the fact that floods have resulted in greater damage and caused greater loss of life than all other natural disasters and that with proper management the effects of flooding can be largely mitigated.

Further, that there is a large and quickly growing unfunded body of flood mitigation works identified as being required to protect our communities and that floodplain risk management takes several years to investigate, plan and implement and that flood mitigation projects are often staged and funded over several years.

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The levels of State and Commonwealth funding are now so low, and have not maintained real value with inflation over the years, that many local government authorities see no real prospect of obtaining funding, and accordingly have unfinished projects, for decades. The Commonwealth Flood Mitigation Program should have a budget of at least \$30 million per annum to achieve any degree of protection in a realistic timeframe.

The ULGA is seeking a minimum commitment from the State and Commonwealth Governments to the following:

- ❖ to a new specific Commonwealth Flood Mitigation Program to be funded on a cost sharing basis between Commonwealth: State: Local Governments generally in accordance with Floodplain Management Authority's Variable Funding Ratios proposal, or alternatively, on a 2 Commonwealth to 2 State to 1 Local Government basis; and
- ❖ to an immediate increase in Commonwealth Flood Mitigation funding to a minimum funding level of \$30 million per year for the next decade together with a commitment that Commonwealth funding will be increased to a level of funding that would enable all known projects to be funded within a decade; and
- ❖ to maintain funding levels in real terms for the next decade.

Your consideration of the matter and advice in due course would be appreciated.

Yours sincerely

**P PISASLE
PRESIDENT**