

BYRON GREENS PO Box 925 Mullumbimby 2482

May 2022

SUBMISSION – NSW Independent Flood Inquiry

“Every time it rains, I panic “
Ombrophobia - the fear of rain

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the disaster that impacted Byron Shire and our region, we encourage urgent and strategic action.

The impacts of the flood in Byron Shire have been devastating for many but we acknowledge that our neighbours in Lismore have experienced a magnitude of impact that is more intense and we feel for their loss and pain. We have experienced a climate change induced disaster and many of our region’s residents are now climate refugees and are experiencing trauma .

The Byron Shire volunteer networks and community members who came to the fore when it was needed reveal our strong and caring community. There was a high level of commitment to assist those in need and to provide the care and support that was required both during and post the event.

The disaster identified that our community is capable, compassionate and committed in an emergency but the emotional and physical impact will be ongoing and must be recognised and supported by Governments.

The lack of early support from government remains unexplained but we hope that this inquiry will ensure that preparedness will be in place to address future events, which we know will occur.

Byron Shire was impacted well beyond previously recorded flood events but the community was not well prepared despite having the required emergency management plans in place and Floodplain Plans adopted for most catchments.

The key issue now is what did we learn and how can we prepare for the future.

The Government must now recognise the potential for extreme weather events of greater magnitude and frequency induced by climate change and must take action to reduce emissions, ensure preparedness and fulfil it’s ‘duty of care’ obligation to the citizens by applying the precautionary principle.

The history of denial regarding the potential for climate change to generate such events indicates negligence by government. For more than three decades, The Greens have been raising climate change as an issue for action and concerns for public and environmental impacts but those concerns have been dismissed and disregarded.

The recent 'catastrophic flood event' has made it very clear that we are at risk and face uncertain climate change induced risks to people, the environment and the economy.

This region has a history of extreme events. The flood and coastal events in the 1950's and 1970's have been overlooked when government land use decisions have been determined. This represents a failure in strategic planning and must be addressed to avoid future devastation and distress. There must be a commitment to undertake detailed modelling to allow for preparedness and must be refined to a local level to avoid future risk.

A precautionary approach is now required based on these recent events and the increasing risks posed by climate change.

Hansard records that on the 17 November 2016 a successful motion in the NSW Legislative Council, 'Climate Change and Storms'. It was presented by Byron Greens member Jan Barham MLC and acknowledged a 2016 Climate Council report titled "***Super-Charged Storms in Australia: The Influence of Climate Change***".

The motion identified the potential for the recent disaster and noted that

(c) climate change will continue to exacerbate storms in Australia, increasing the risk of devastating impacts; and

(d) without strong action on climate change, storms and other extreme weather events will continue to become more intense and more damaging.

The report and the motion are evidence that there was knowledge of a foreseeable risk based on scientific evidence, but it was ignored.

The NSW Government must now respond by acknowledging the likelihood of future extreme events and must act quickly and decisively to mitigate the impacts of climate change by addressing emission reductions, by reviewing planning directions, by investing in preparedness and by ensuring that the future management of such events is focussed on the local level and fulfills the needs identified in part C of the Terms of Reference of this inquiry.

Recommendation 1. That the NSW Government take immediate action to minimise climate change impacts by not approving new coal and gas mines and committing to all aspects of planning, adaptation and response to climate change to ensure preparedness for future disaster events.

The Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements 2020 established a clear and comprehensive framework for governments to undertake the vital long term modelling required to inform future preparedness and adaptation.

The implementation of the recommendations in Chapter 4 Supporting better decisions must now be undertaken as a matter of urgency.

The information is required to inform development decisions and approvals made by state and local governments that may in the absence of the detailed long term modelling put peoples' lives at risk.

In the interim there should be a range of decisions made by state government that require local governments to avoid risk with planning decisions. Whilst the recommendations apply to the Australian, state and territory governments there's a need for local government to be involved as the impacts of fire, flood and storms are localised and only by engaging with local knowledge will foreseeable risk and avoidance be achieved.

Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements 2020

Recommendation 4.5 National climate projections

Australian, state and territory governments should produce downscaled climate projections:

- 1. to inform the assessment of future natural disaster risk by relevant decision makers, including state and territory government agencies with planning and emergency management responsibilities*
- 2. underpinned by an agreed common core set of climate trajectories and timelines, and*
- 3. subject to regular review.*

Recommendation 2. The NSW Government must take action to work collaboratively with the Federal Government to ensure that long term disaster modelling is undertaken for downscaled climate projections with a clear focus on climate change modelling and deliver localised information to inform planning and management of future risks.

Unfortunately it was clear that there was a lack of adequate preparation and planning by government when this event occurred.

At a local level, Byron Shire Council is required to produce both a Local Emergency Management Plan (EMPLAN) and a Local Recovery Plan, under the *State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989*. The MP identifies the need for specific sub plans also.

These documents are produced in conjunction with Tweed Council and are required to be publicly available. However, the specific sub plan in relation to flooding, the Byron Shire Flood Plan 2013 was not available on BSC website and no specific community based response planning was in place.

The SERM Act requirements for planning should be reviewed in terms of the effectiveness of the combined planning and the reliance of a volunteer agency, SES, as the lead agency responsible for responding. The review and updating of the plans and sub plans subject to new updated planning by council is essential. Since the production of the Byron Shire Flood Plan 2013, council has undertaken additional studies for floodplain management and these should've initiated a new Flood Plan.

It's recognised that the documents are detailed and valuable documents for the councils and emergency response agencies but they are not user friendly for the community. There is

specific and vital information contained for the operational management of an emergency but there also needs to be clear and relevant information provided for the community.

Requirements for public education and training need to be strengthened to ensure that the community is aware and prepared and that this information is conveyed in an accessible format.

This event has made it clear that the level of planning also needs to be more localised to ensure that remote areas are informed and resourced to respond.

Recommendation 3. The requirements for planning , preparation and recovery plans required under the *State Emergency and Rescue Management Act* are reviewed for effectiveness and also provided in a user friendly and relevant format for the community.

Communication of planning and preparation

In this recent event the failure of all local communication systems and power meant that access to information via telecommunications was unavailable. Preparedness must provide for key information to be available to residents in a non-digital format and supplemented by training. The failure of communications meant that residents weren't able to access the BSC website Dashboard facilities. This lack of access to information meant that awareness of the extent of the risk was unknown and contributed to the lack of safety.

There are many aspects to the planning and preparedness that require review but there are some areas where alternative preparedness planning is required as a backup due to the likelihood of telecommunication and grid electricity failure.

Recommendation 4. A requirement that all councils make relevant plans available on websites including relevant sub-plans and that a preparedness planning program for the community that includes training, dedicated localised .plans and the production of information that doesn't rely on access to internet services.

Note – pre-internet preparedness planning involved the production of leaflets and information that was in the form of printed leaflets, laminated items and fridge magnets.

We note the establishment of local **Resilience programs** as an important step in preparing and supporting community but it is Governments who must lead and provide the legislative authority with guidance and resources to make it possible. There's a vital role for local government to take on preparedness planning but it needs financial commitment and direction from the state and federal government.

The information to inform residents of key issues such as what to do and where to go in case of an event must be readily available. The identification of evacuation centres and guidance on safety and vital personal information that will be needed if homes or property is lost and or damaged should be prioritised. Many people are still trying to navigate the support networks without vital documentation to meet government requirements for access to funding and support.

Recommendation 5. That the state provide additional support to councils to ensure that response planning is in place and that the council and community are prepared.

Recommendation 6. That the reliance on a volunteer networks, SES, RFS, Fires and Marine Rescue are reviewed and that consideration for an enhanced role and responsibility for local government is considered to provide a more engaged status by councils to assist the various volunteer networks and the general community .

Volunteer Roles

It seems incredible that the lead role for emergency management is the responsibility of a volunteer network. The SES and other volunteers did amazing work for their communities in the recent event but they deserve greater support in future. It must be recognised that often their own properties and families are at risk when an event requires them to act to protect others.

In Byron Shire there are ongoing concerns regarding dwindling numbers of volunteers due to the pre-existing housing crisis in the region. Ballina MP, Tamara Smith has spoken about how this issue has been identified by those organisations due to the requirement for volunteers to live within a defined radius of the operation headquarters.

Local government are stakeholders in the preparation of the emergency plans and professional employees have expertise, (particularly engineering risk assessment) for assessing and responding to risks during disasters.

A more defined and enhanced role for local government response could enable coordination with volunteer networks and ensure that the expertise and the workforce is identified prior to an event. In light of the recent event it seems evident that the request for additional State and Federal government support should be identified as an early assessment action that initiates and requests that support. This could be a key role for councils.

There was a high level of concern across the region regarding the delay in external support (ADF) being made available. A protocol should be developed to ensure early assessment of risk to enable an early request for additional support. This would be a clear role for councils.

Recommendation 7. That the potential for local government staff and expertise be identified for greater responsibility in the case of a disaster /emergency events be explored and that a **protocol** be developed that provides for early assessment of damage and risk that initiates an early request for support and response by other levels of government.

Local Government role post event – Planning for the future

Post disaster there's a vital role in collating, assessing and responding to the damage but also a priority for future planning.

Byron Shire Council, like other councils is already under pressure to deliver on core day to day responsibilities. Over the last two decades there has been increasing cost and responsibility shifting to local government from the State Government.

To address the impacts of the recent disaster and plan for the future, council will need support from the State Government. The State must provide funding and resources to make this happen without interruption to the core responsibilities of council. The potential to engage additional staff, consultants or to seek secondment of specialist staff from government agencies to undertake the assessment and planning must be considered.

Infrastructure

The failure of major infrastructure puts lives at risk. Roads and bridges deny access to safety. Power, telecommunications, water and sewer damage affect access to health and support.

Already major works have been undertaken to repair damaged infrastructure to enable residents access to their homes and their community. The level of damage to **roads, bridges and causeways** are major projects and the assistance of the ADF in this process has allowed for urgent repairs to happen quickly. Unfortunately some of the repairs have simply re-established the existing standards without re-design to higher standards and therefore pose a future risk and failure repeat

To ensure future safety there must be a commitment to funding that can supports the **betterment of infrastructure** to a standard that's able to withstand at least the magnitude of the recent event. There's been media reports of the government supporting betterment funding and this is welcomed.

The failure of **water and sewer infrastructure** must also be reviewed. The failure of these services contributes to the lack of safety and hygiene for residents and for the environment. Detailed analysis of the cause of malfunction and of the potential for future-proofing must be undertaken. This work will also require funding for the technical assessments and planning as well as new construction or upgrade.

Government must provide the support that council needs to ensure that the repair of damaged infrastructure isn't just a temporary fix, that may need to be redone again when the next disaster strikes.

Recommendation 8. That funding be identified from the State and Federal Governments to councils for the redesign and construction of infrastructure that failed during the recent disaster event.

Land Use Planning

Risks associated with the location of housing and infrastructure must be reviewed. As was determined in recommendations from the Fire Inquiry, there needs to be a review of the State Government's planning requirements for housing and development with a strong focus on risk assessment and avoidance. This is a role for councils but can only be done under the direction of the state.

A **review of State planning legislation and policies** is vital to ensure that disaster risk management is a priority. The recent experience identifies the need to limit development on areas that are now known to be at risk. To undertake the assessment and planning work required to learn from this experience the State must provide financial and or technical

assistance to council to immediately prepare the planning documents that will guide future development risk avoidance.

There also needs to be commitment to an assessment standard that considers the **worst case scenario planning** that goes beyond the recent event and takes on board specific climate change planning. We now know that the atmospheric moisture capacity increases by 7% with each degree of warming. The extra rainfall will mean increased flooding. The outcomes of the assessment and planning must then be financially supported to allow for timely implementation of risk avoidance strategies and infrastructure.

It's obvious that financial support to avoid risk is a cost effective outcome compared to the extremely high financial impacts of responding and rebuilding after each disaster.

Government funding to support risk avoidance strategies

A major concern for the shire in this recent event has been the risk to rural areas from unprecedented land slips and the loss of property and damage to the road and communication networks. The development of a **Landslip Management Plan** should be undertaken immediately with funding support from State and Federal Government.

This approach to risk management must apply the Precautionary Principle and must dismiss theoretical planning that proposes to mitigate risks. Instead new development should not be approved in areas where foreseeable risk is likely.

There should be clear direction to **avoid development on floodplains** and a return to the **prohibition on the introduction of fill in floodplains** that clearly exacerbates the risk.

Byron Shire Council already has **Floodplain Management Plans** for much of the shire but the implementation of these plans requires funding from the State and the Federal Government.

A key issue that shouldn't be overlooked is the increased pressure to develop in flood prone areas and that new development generally reduces the permeable surfaces available to absorb the rainfall.

The second round of flooding in Byron Bay at the end of March was more extreme than historical records and could indicate that increased development has contributed to the lack of absorption in the catchment as the town is increasingly covered by hard surfaces. Greater efforts to limit the hard surfaces within new developments is vital. A review of existing areas for redesign to provide increased vegetated areas must be investigated.

Recommendation 9. that a review of State based planning requirements is undertaken to ensure that risk management and avoidance is a high order issue that is not able to be dismissed by theoretical mitigation. **Development on floodplains should be prohibited.**

Recommendation 10. That funding be allocated to council to immediately undertake the studies and planning required to assess the impacts of the recent event and where necessary prepare new planning instruments that are based on **risk avoidance for development** and undertake works that will mitigate future risk.

The second round of flooding impacted the southern coastal areas of Byron Bay and Suffolk Park. These are high density areas where there are problems with drainage systems. There's an urgent need to address catchment issues and the capacities of the **stormwater systems**. The town of Byron Bay and particularly the central commercial area experienced flooding of many business premises and the road network, including inundation of underground carparks. Some of the affected businesses are still being repaired.

To address the risk there's an urgent need for an **upgrade of the drainage systems** and that also requires a financial commitment from the State. In some of the coastal residential areas of Byron Shire including Suffolk Park and New Brighton, there are inadequate drainage systems. The level of the roads is higher than the adjacent private properties and resulted in the flood waters being transferred from the roads onto the adjacent lands and flooding homes. There must be funding to ensure that drainage systems are upgraded for these areas to avoid future impacts.

Housing Adaptation and response to affordability needs

In the first round of flooding, the areas in the north of shire, Mullumbimby, South Golden Beach, New Brighton and Ocean Shores experienced flooding of properties that had previously been regarded as being clear of flood predictions.

For the many residents whose lives and homes have been impacted by the disaster event there needs to be urgent action to assist them in gaining access to their homes .

The potential to adapt some of the impacted properties must be considered and all options explored including

- wet-proofing
- electrical / services elevation
- house raising
- landscape treatments to divert water

There should be a clear policy and strategy developed that provides the options that exist for adapting existing housing for future events. This should be informed by consistent and informed assessments of the likelihood of future risk and a focus on the types of building materials that should be avoided.

Recommendation 11. That funding be identified from the State and Federal Governments for adaptation of existing dwellings and other structures to avoid a future risk.

Housing Availability

The North Coast and particularly Byron Shire was already experiencing a housing availability and affordability crisis prior to the recent disaster. As a result of the flood event, there is now a **housing emergency** of extreme proportion.

The reasons for this are many but in Byron Shire one of the influences on the housing crisis is the negligence of government in allowing the use of residential housing for the purpose of

Short Term Rental Accommodation (STRA) (Airbnb) while at the same time applying pressure on councils to approve new housing.

There's a major conflict with these two approaches. As more housing is approved the use of the housing for STRA is increasing. This is resulting in both a shortage of housing availability and an increase in property prices. There is currently existing housing sitting empty across the shire because STRA is so lucrative.

These factors have had a major influence on the accessibility to housing in Byron Shire for essential workers and those who are available and willing to fulfill voluntary positions with organisations such as **SES and RFS as well as council staff, nurses, teachers, care providers and other essential workers.**

Additional impact comes from the pressure to deliver more housing stock without a focus on risk management. In some circumstances, developers are allowed to address risks by presenting theoretical studies that the impacts can be mitigated to gain approval.

The unprecedented impact on housing in the shire has created an urgent need for many to have alternate safe housing. Access to housing is essential to avoid the further trauma and mental health impacts that results from a loss of 'normal' life. For residents to be able to maintain employment, education and social activities it's vital that they are able to access housing in their home area. It's recognised some of the need will be short term while repair work to some properties is undertaken. For others there will be a longer term need as houses are demolished due to flood and landslip damage and as decisions that need to be made by residents and insurers as to the possibilities for rebuilding.

The State must make available Crown land for at least short term housing and provide pre-fab or quick build housing that can meet this urgent need. Some of the housing required will be temporary, so the land would still be available for future identified needs and the housing could be re-purposed in the future. In Byron Shire there are lands in the unused railway corridor that could provide for this urgent need.

Recommendation 12. The State and Federal Government must urgently invest in temporary housing that can be developed on Crown land to provide for the most urgent needs of the community.

Recommendation 13. A program for designated housing for **essential workers and volunteers** under a **social housing program** must be activated.

According to Housing NSW website figures in 2019, the social housing stock in the Northern Rivers indicates a major negligence in delivery. **Byron Shire has only 19 social housing dwellings**, Ballina 593, Lismore 501 and Tweed 916. (see Attachment 1) This information reveals the lack of commitment by the State and this should be addressed as a matter of urgency by the Federal Government.

Recommendation 14. An urgent commitment by the State and Federal Government to **deliver more social housing in Byron Shire.**

The recent disaster has highlighted the lack of available housing in the Byron Shire, while over 2,000 entire properties are available for Airbnb. The state has made a commitment to allow Byron Shire to have a reduced 90 day limit on STRA premises. An independent analysis of the impact of the 90 day limit revealed that it could incentivise up to 1500 properties to be made available for the permanent rental market.¹

Recommendation 15. The NSW Government immediately progress the planning proposal to limit STRA to 90 days in Byron Shire to provide much needed permanent rental housing stock.

Insurance

Recommendation 16. The federal government must adopt a publicly funded national insurance scheme in order for premiums to remain affordable, as natural disasters become more frequent and intense due to climate change.

Communications

The failure of telecommunications during the recent disaster placed lives at risk. It not only inconvenienced thousands of residents but also substantially delayed recovery. It's ongoing, with some residents still without services.

This represents a failure of existing technology that must be reviewed. Many residents were without power and telecommunications and **could not access 000 or SES** services. This was particularly dangerous for hinterland residents who were also unable to physically leave due to the loss of road access that resulted from landslides. Some residents were desperately in need of health services and medications but without communication to seek help.

Internet communication and access was made available in some areas by the use of a small number of private Starlink connections via satellite and using private electrical supplies in the form of generators. It's essential that the technology is reviewed and as a result of the recent event, a potential to change to satellite technology, especially for remote rural settlements be considered to provide a reliable communication model.

Dedicated groups of community members undertook dangerous and time consuming missions into some of the more remote areas of the shire to rescue and support those who were at risk. Lives were saved by these actions. Others paid for the services of private helicopters to rescue residents in need of urgent hospitalisation and medical interventions and provide supplies.

Recommendation 17. That **satellite technology** be integrated with NBN and mobile phone networks, in a manner which insures multiple layers of redundancies for all 3 delivery mediums, so that communications can be maintained in rural and remote communities in the event of disasters.

¹ Urbis Assessment

It's essential that communication and data access is viable in extreme events to allow access to information, banking payment systems (social security payments) and emergency services.

The failure of accurate and timely warnings for evacuation resulted in many community members not seeking refuge early. This added to the damage and to the stress and trauma associated with the impacts of the disaster.

Recommendation 18. That some form of **non technology warning system** be established in the likelihood of telecommunication failure.

Also the reliance on technology assumes that everyone is tech savvy. It must be recognised that not everyone, especially aged and financially disadvantaged members of the community may not have 'smart phone' access and the reliance on these forms of communication are inequitable and must be addressed.

Recommendation 19. A review of the BOM and SES warnings to residents must be a priority and must not rely on technology alone.

One aspect of the failure of communication systems and confusion with warnings is that residents endured extreme risks and trauma. It's obviously far better to take higher precaution than to experience a disaster. No doubt people would prefer the inconvenience of packing up and leaving their premises rather than being trapped, injured and at risk due to a failure to anticipate a serious and life threatening event.

Again the precautionary approach is an act of duty of care and should be implemented in the provision of timely risk avoidance strategies.

Post event

Due to the lack of preparation for the scale and impact of the event, prime responsibility for providing for the needs of the community was undefined. What occurred was an immediate and compassionate response by the community. In particular the Mullumbimby District Neighbourhood Centre (MDNC) became the focal point for co-ordination of support services. MDNC is a highly trusted local entity.

The adjacent Mullumbimby Ex Services Club and the Ocean Shores Country Club quickly provided their premises as evacuation centres and to support those who were made homeless with somewhere safe to rest and recover. The community organised to provide the necessary support needed; food, clothing, mattresses and bedding and hygiene necessities were donated.

The MDNC then became the coordination point for the clean-up services once it was safe to do so. The use of Facebook became the means by which the community reached out for help and the response was amazing. People turned up to do the work, donated the necessary tools and the equipment to do so. It's a credit to those involved in the co-ordination that it was done so effectively.

All our local volunteer services, SES, RFS, Marine Rescue, Surf Lifesaving and many others came together to provide the support and assistance that affected residents needed. It's essential that recognition of the efforts of the community based services, volunteers and general community is acknowledged but also that lessons are learnt.

What must be acknowledged is the **trauma and mental health impact** of this event and the need for ongoing support and assistance to the community members and to first responders.

A review of how this can be supported for the future is vital. Local community action works but planning for the future must also be considered with the insights gained from this disaster.

Recommendation 20. Funding support for long term mental health services to address the ongoing stress and trauma experienced by first responders and the community.

Recommendation 21. A program to fund community organisations and businesses who have proven they are able and willing to respond in such circumstances should be considered as part of preparedness planning.

The response by organisations and businesses should be reviewed to identify if there were incurred expenses in delivering the support required. The staffing requirements and any out of pocket costs should be estimated and reimbursed.

Recommendation 22. A reimbursement program be made available to community organisations and businesses who provided services and experienced costs for staff or other services during the flood crisis and response period.

The use of commercial premises as **evacuation centres** was necessary in this event due to the lack of road access to other safe locations. The lack of a flood-free evacuation centre in Mullumbimby has been identified in the [North Byron Floodplain Plan](#) adopted in 2020. Funding for investigation of a new centre or centres was rejected early this year. **The funding should be immediately available.**

There must be preparedness on this front and identification of localised properties that could be available and resourced to provide the necessary protection in any future events. These safe places should be well known to the community as part of future preparedness training and information.

Another element for evacuation centres is the need for specialist support services to be available. Stories of unsafe conditions due to overcrowding and a mix of those with special needs must be considered. The responsibility and delivery of services must be local to ensure that there isn't a delay in responding.

Recommendation 23. The investigation and identification of **evacuation centre/s** must be a priority and funding made available immediately. Funding is also required to ensure that centres are properly equipped and plans made for the provision of specialist services to be available to assist those in need.

Future Proofing supply chains

The recent events highlighted the reliance of our region on basic supplies such as food and fuel from the capital cities. There's action that could be taken to minimise the lack of supply by the development of regional logistics hubs.

Recommendation 24. That NSW Government use planning and fiscal stimulus to encouragement of state wide logistics hubs within a 10 year time frame (transport, food and essential fuels) which can be accessed, not only from Sydney (but Victoria /Queensland and South Australia) immediately and when logistics from Sydney fails.

This will ensure the supply chain issues evidenced are not repeated and rural and remote communities are not staved of the essential factors of production and food. This will reduce the cost of living in regional and remote areas, provide employment and security, it will also encourage decentralisation and build the state's resilience.

Covid

The other issue that was overlooked in this circumstance was the Covid risk which was secondary to the immediate risks posed by the impact of the flood, but should be a part of preparedness planning, at least in terms of the provision of masks.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to have input to the review of the disaster that has so dramatically impacted on the community of Byron Shire and the region.

We hope that in light of this event and the previous fire event in 2019 that Government provides the support and resources to ensure that the Byron Shire community is prepared and able to respond to an uncertain future of climate change induced disaster events.

Your sincerely
Jan Barham
Byron Greens Convenor

Attachment 1. -Public Housing Stock – North Coast

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Attachment 2 - Byron Greens recommendations

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Recommendation 7. That the potential for **local government staff** and expertise be identified for greater responsibility in the case of a disaster /emergency events be explored and that a **protocol** be developed that provides for early assessment of damage and risk that initiates an early request for support and response by other levels of government.

Recommendation 8. That funding be identified from the State and Federal Governments to councils for the **redesign and construction of infrastructure** that failed during the recent disaster event.

Recommendation 9. that a review of **State based planning requirements** is undertaken to ensure that risk management and avoidance is a high order issue that is not able to be dismissed by theoretical mitigation. **Development on floodplains should be prohibited.**

Recommendation 10. That funding be allocated to council to immediately undertake the studies and planning required to assess the impacts of the recent event and where necessary prepare **new planning instruments** that are based on risk avoidance for development and undertake works that will mitigate future risk.

Recommendation 11. That funding be identified from the State and Federal Governments for **adaptation of existing dwellings** and other structures to avoid a future risk.

Recommendation 12. The State and Federal Government must urgently invest in **temporary housing** that can be developed on Crown land to provide for the most urgent needs of the community.

Recommendation 13. A program for designated housing for **essential workers and volunteers under a social housing program** must be activated.

Recommendation 14. An urgent commitment by the State and Federal Government to deliver more **social housing in Byron Shire**.

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Recommendation 19. A review of the **BOM and SES warnings** to residents must be a priority and must not rely on technology alone.

Recommendation 20. Funding support for **long term mental health services** to address the ongoing stress and trauma experienced by first responders and the community.

Recommendation 21. A program to **fund community organisations and businesses** who have proven they are able and willing to respond in such circumstances should be considered as part of preparedness planning.

Recommendation 22. A **reimbursement program** be made available to community organisations and businesses who provided services and experienced costs for staff or other services during the flood crisis and response period.

Recommendation 23. The investigation and identification of **evacuation centre/s** must be a priority and funding made available immediately. Funding is also required to ensure that centres are properly equipped and plans made for the provision of specialist services to be available to assist those in need.

Recommendation 24. That NSW Government use planning and fiscal stimulus to encouragement of state wide **logistics hubs** within a 10 year time frame (transport, food and essential fuels) which can be accessed, not only from Sydney (but Victoria /Queensland and South Australia) immediately and when logistics from Sydney fails.