



DIRECTOR SHIRE SERVICES REPORT

11th October 2005

DSS3	MACLEAY VALLEY EMERGENCY RISK MANAGEMENT STUDY FILE: * MKF
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SUMMARY:

Reporting on application for grant funding under the Natural Disaster Mitigation Programme.

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In mid 2001 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) commissioned a review of Australia's approach in dealing with natural disasters – mitigation to guard against disasters, response during a disaster event, and post disaster relief and recovery. The review was carried out by a High Level Group (HLG) of officials representing Commonwealth, State, and Territory Governments and the Australian Local Government Association.

The review identified the strengths and weaknesses of our current arrangements for managing natural disasters.

The HLG concluded that current arrangements could be improved to ensure that Australia has a world-class national framework for natural disaster management – thus achieving safer, more sustainable communities, and reduced risk, damage and losses.

Central to the new approach is a systematic and widespread national process of disaster risk assessments and, most importantly, a fundamental shift in focus towards cost effective, evidence based disaster mitigation. This represents an historic move beyond disaster response and reaction, towards anticipation and mitigation.

In December 2003 COAG gave in principle approval to the report from the review, which included some 66 recommendations. A copy of the recommendations is available from Shire Services.

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In brief, of the 66 recommendations, of particular importance to Kempsey Shire Council (KSC) are the following:

Recommendation 4

That all levels of government commit to a five-year reform package.

Recommendation 5

Where Local Government powers exist, Local Governments also have responsibilities, in partnership with States and Territories, to contribute to the safety and well being of their communities.

Recommendation 6

All three levels of government agree to implement a five-year Disaster Mitigation Package.

Recommendation 8

That cost sharing for each programme under the Disaster Mitigation Australia Package normally be on the basis of a maximum one third Commonwealth, at least matched by States and Territories, with the balance of project funds contributed by Local Governments or other local bodies.

Recommendation 45

That the Natural Disaster Relief Arrangements (NDRA) be amended to provide a more effective incentive for Local Governments to undertake disaster mitigation, by imposing a deduction of 10 per cent in available disaster relief assistance for any Local Governments not having disaster mitigation strategies in place and being implemented for their area by December 2005.

Recommendation 50 1(d)

Local Governments should continue to be reimbursed for disaster damage and costs above threshold levels, except that where disaster mitigation strategies are not in place and being implemented by December 2005 there should be a deduction of 10 per cent in disaster relief assistance available to the Local Government.

The Australian Government announced in the 2003-2004 Budget that it would provide funding for a new mitigation package, including a new mitigation programme, the Natural Disaster Mitigation Programme (NDMP).

Kempsey Shire Council has been successful in securing funding under the NDMP to undertake the Macleay Valley Emergency Risk Management Study. The project's estimated value is \$40,000.00 to be shared jointly by Commonwealth, State and Local Government authorities.

Formal notification has been received from the Minister for Emergency Services, Mr Tony Kelly and is dated 15th September 2005. The offer must be accepted within 60 days of the date thereof.

The agreement is for the amount of \$26,666.00 to be funded jointly by the State and Commonwealth Governments, with a required contribution of \$13,334.00 from Council.

REPORT IMPLICATIONS:

- ***Environmental***

The Study will identify risks to the environment and provide a trigger to review plans and processes for the environment. In addition treatment strategies will be considered to reduce the impacts of natural disaster events where practicable but also review recovery and rehabilitation plans.

- ***Social***

The study will assist in building closer relationships between the community and the various emergency services, government and non-government organisations. The study will also assess the vulnerability of the various communities and therefore allow strategies to be developed and put in place to increase their awareness and subsequently their resilience.

- ***Economic (Financial)***

The economic implications are that Council is required to contribute the amount of \$13,334.00 to undertake the study. No funds have been provided in the 2005/06 Budget and it will be recommended that the vote be provided from Working Funds.

In the event that Council does not undertake this study Council is at risk of receiving reduced funding under the NDMP in the event of a natural disaster.

- ***Policy or Statutory***

Kempsey Shire Council has a statutory obligation to undertake the study.

- ***Director's Review***

Council is urged to support the Recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the offer of funding be accepted and that \$13,334.00 be allocated from Working Funds.

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K J Finnie
DIRECTOR SHIRE SERVICES