

7.10. FLOOD WARNING INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK ASSET RETURN

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| REPORT AUTHOR | Contract Manager |
| MANAGER | Acting Manager Infrastructure Planning and Delivery |
| DEPARTMENT | Infrastructure Planning and Delivery |
| DATE | 28 April 2026 |

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- Approves the transfer of ownership of rain gauge asset 531149 (Rex Creek Intake), from the Commonwealth of Australia.**
- Delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the Local Government Act 2009 to enter into contracts, negotiate, finalise and execute any and all matters associated with or in relation to the contract/s subject to Council's normal procurement policies and practices.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Australian Government's Flood Warning Infrastructure Network (FWIN) program aims to centralise the ownership of rain and river gauges. The program is administrated through the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM).

To-date Council has transferred seven flood network assets to BoM, this paper recommends that one of the seven is transferred back to Council as it is needed for operational requirements.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATIONS / RESOLUTIONS

At the Ordinary Meeting dated 25 March 2025, it was resolved that the ownership of rain gauge asset 531149 (Rex Creek Intake) be transferred to the Commonwealth of Australia.

REPORT/BACKGROUND

In 2023, the Australian Government committed up to \$236 million over 10 years to centralise the ownership of 1,600 priority rainfall and river gauges owned by local and state governments. The Flood Warning Infrastructure Network (FWIN) program is administrated by the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM).

Staff from Council's Disaster Management Unit worked with BOM to identify a list of ten flood warning assets to be acquired from Council. Under the program guidelines assets used for operational purposes are not eligible, as once an asset is acquired by BoM it can be moved or changed without notice.

Seven of the ten identified assets were transferred over to BoM between March 2025 and March 2026. With a further three planned to be transferred post July 2026.

Staff from Council's Infrastructure Planning and Delivery Team, who manage the day-to-day maintenance and running of the Council's flood warning assets identified two of the ten assets had operational purposes. Staff worked with BoM to reduce the original FWIN list down to eight.

Table One displays the original ten sites due for transfer to BoM and identifies the two sites which will be removed from the FWIN program. One of the assets, Rex Creek Rain Gauge was transferred to BoM in March 2025 and its location was due to be moved by BoM. This paper seeks to transfer ownership of the Rex Creek Rain Gauge back to Council, as it provides critical information to the Water and Wastewater Team.

Table One – Assets Identified for Transfer To BOM

| # | Flood Asset | Comment |
|----|--|---|
| 1 | Barratt Creek River Gauge (531132) | Ownership currently sits with Council, BOM have removed this asset from the FWIN program. Critical asset used for operational purposes. This asset automatically control's Council's wig-wags and road sign closures when the river reaches certain triggers. |
| 2 | Craiglie Rain Gauge (531133) | Transferred to BOM on a 10-year lease agreement commencing 1 March 2026. |
| 3 | CREB Track Rain & River Gauge (531145) | Due to be transferred to BOM in future. |
| 4 | Daintree Village Rain & River Gauge (531110) | Due to be transferred to BOM in future. |
| 5 | Diwan Rain Gauge (531135) | Transferred to BOM on a 10-year lease agreement commencing 1 March 2026. |
| 6 | Mossman WWTP Rain Gauge (531147) | Transferred over to BOM in March 2025. |
| 7 | Port Douglas WWTP Rain Gauge (531134) | Transferred to BOM on a 10-year lease agreement commencing 1 March 2026. |
| 8 | Rex Creek Rain Gauge (531149) | Transferred over to BOM in March 2025. Critical asset used for operational purposes to be transferred back to Council. This asset is used by the W&WW Team and provides critical information at the water intake. |
| 9 | Stewart Creek Valley Rain Gauge (531148) | Transferred to BOM on a 10-year lease agreement commencing 1 March 2026. |
| 10 | Yandill Rain Gauge (531146) | Transferred to BOM on a 10-year lease agreement commencing 1 March 2026. |

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Whilst retaining ownership of the two flood infrastructure network assets does has financial impacts, this is offset by the operational benefits it provides to the Operational & Maintenance Team and Water & Wastewater Team. The annual financial implication of maintaining each asset is approximately \$10,000 this includes maintenance, telemetry and data hosting on a secure portal.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Council staff use the flood warning assets to inform operational decision making, such as water treatment operations, road closures and disaster management. By retaining control of the two assets Council retains full control and access to this information.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

NIL

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

NIL

CORPORATE AND OPERATIONAL PLAN

This report has been prepared in accordance with the following:

Corporate Plan 2025-2030 Initiatives:

Theme 3 - Service Delivery

We deliver Council services effectively and efficiently to meet community expectations, focusing on the wellbeing of both the community and our employees.

3.5 - Employ a proactive and preventative approach to asset management.

Operational Plan 2025-2026 Actions:

4.2.2 - Audit early warning flood infrastructure and identify high risk locations.

LEGISLATION AND POLICY

Not applicable

CONSULTATION

Disaster Management Unit; Water & Wastewater Team; Maintenance & Operations Team; Bureau of Meteorology.

CONCLUSION

Since the transfer of Rex Creek rain gauge to the BoM in March 2025, it has been advised that the BoM were going to relocate this gauge, therefore severely impacting Council's ability to obtain data regarding the current water intake. This asset will be transferred back into Council's ownership to ensure this data is available.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil