

7.18. SUPPORT FOR MOTION TO LGAQ CONFERENCE 2026

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DEPARTMENT	Corporate and Communities
TEAM	Disaster Management Unit
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RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to support Noosa Shire Council's motion to be tabled at the 2026 Local Government Association of Queensland's Annual Conference calling on the Federal Government to provide ongoing funding and coordination for local governments to transition to a suitable flood monitoring platform that collects, displays and analyses real-time data from rainfall and river level gauges for flood warning and local disaster management.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) is calling on local governments to submit motions for consideration at the annual conference to be held in Cairns in October 2026.

Noosa Shire Council (NSC) have drafted a motion to be submitted at the 2026 LGAQ Conference, which will include demonstrable support from other Queensland councils.

The motion is seeking ongoing funding to support councils acquire a management information system to replace the unsupported Enviromon platform. The replacement system will deliver a resilient, nationally supported flood monitoring capability that enables local governments to effectively manage increasing flood risk in real-time and protect communities now and into the future.

The proposed NSC motion, and to which support is sought from the Douglas Shire Council, is as follows:

"That the LGAQ calls on the Federal Government to provide ongoing funding and coordination for local governments to transition to a suitable flood monitoring platform that collects, displays and analyses real-time data from rainfall and river level gauges for flood warning and local disaster management."

PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATIONS / RESOLUTIONS

Not Applicable

REPORT/BACKGROUND

Local governments play a critical role in disaster management as the level of government closest to communities. They operate flood warning networks, manage road closures, coordinate evacuations, and support emergency services during severe weather. To do this effectively, particularly in flood-prone areas councils depend on timely access to accurate, localised rainfall and river-level data.

For many years, councils have relied on the Bureau of Meteorology's (BoM) Enviromon system to collect and display real-time gauge data. As a freely provided platform, it has been central to local flood intelligence. However, with Enviromon now unsupported and nearing end-of-life, councils face a significant capability gap. Without a suitable replacement, loss of reliable real-time data will reduce situational awareness and slow emergency decision-making across all levels of government.

While modern platforms offer improved functionality such as cloud-based integration, real-time dashboards, automated alerts, and predictive analytics, they introduce new challenges. The most significant of these is funding. The cost of evaluating, procuring, implementing, and maintaining these systems, including ongoing subscriptions, is beyond the capacity of many councils, particularly in regional and remote areas.

Equally important is the need for technical assistance. Many smaller councils do not have the in-house expertise required to assess platform suitability, compare vendors, manage procurement processes, or ensure successful integration with existing systems. Without support, there is a risk that councils may adopt inconsistent or suboptimal solutions, or delay transition altogether.

A strong case is created for coordinated funding and centralised assistance. Financial support through subsidies or a state-supported model would ensure equitable access to critical flood intelligence systems and enable councils to make informed and consistent decisions.

Without this combined funding and technical support, Queensland risks a fragmented approach, with differing capability across local governments. A coordinated solution will strengthen disaster preparedness, improve decision-making, and ensure all councils regardless of size or resources can continue to protect their communities in an increasingly volatile climate.

As the Bureau of Meteorology's (BoM) Enviromon software reaches end-of-life, local governments are actively seeking transition to replacement platforms to maintain critical flood monitoring capabilities.

However, to-date there has been no federally coordinated response to assist local governments in identifying a suitable replacement platform, transitioning from their existing Enviromon systems, and funding the commercial setup and subscription fees.

There is a significant risk to all levels of government and the community if a local government either does not proactively seek a replacement for Enviromon before an unsupported system failure occurs or makes an ill-informed choice to adopt a platform that is incompatible with other council's and agencies.

The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) has made the decision to no longer support Enviromon for sound technical reasons. However, in the absence of a coordinated and supported transition to an alternative platform, local governments and all supporting emergency service agencies risk losing visibility to key rainfall and water level observations during critical periods of severe weather.

The coordinated transition to a common suitable platform would support data and resource sharing (Council 2 Council) between councils, state agencies, and emergency services and enable a more unified and effective disaster response across regions.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Moving from the free Enviromon system to subscription-based alternatives introduces ongoing financial commitments. Costs associated with licensing, system configuration and maintenance, and technical support present a significant challenge, particularly for regional and smaller councils with limited resources. Whilst Douglas Shire Council has not been a previous subscriber to Enviromon, it has needed to invest hundreds of thousands of dollars in flood warning infrastructure and the maintenance of that infrastructure and information platforms. With the handover of assets to the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM), Council will now need to source data directly from the BoM in the future. Council having a single, supported and financed platform, along with all the other councils in Queensland, will then be able to provide information into various flood warning systems without being asked to pay additional costs to obtain the information.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Without a sustainable funding model, there is a risk that councils will be unable to maintain timely flood warning services to their communities. Disaster Management is identified as a Corporate Risk and specifically the failure to plan, prevent, prepare, respond to and recover from disaster events, in accordance with statutory obligations under the Disaster Management Act 2003 (QLD) and community expectations. Consequences from this risk include delayed response, inefficient use of resources, increased harm to community and prolonged service disruption.

Access to a single supported operating platform, providing timely access to accurate, localised rainfall and river level data, assists in mitigating this risk by ensuring Council and the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) can operate off flood warning networks, manage road closures, coordinate evacuations, and support emergency services during severe weather.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental implications related to this report.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is a risk that councils will be unable to maintain timely flood warning services to their communities. Increasingly communities self-inform through information on rainfall and river levels via Council's Disaster Dashboard. Council's LDMG rely on real time flood information to forecast flooding and issue emergency alerts or arrange evacuations.

Any disruption to the access of real time information on rainfall and river conditions exposes communities to increased risk and certain assets to increased risk, such as the Daintree Ferry.

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.

3.7 - Identify and manage risk.

Theme 4 - Recovery and Resilience

To partner with community to build resilience against natural disasters creating a strong sense of social capital.

4.5 - Undertake effective disaster management (planning, preparedness, response, recovery).

Operational Plan 2026-2027 Actions:

4.4.2 - Upgrade early warning infrastructure by completing an audit of current assets and locations, identifying high risk locations that require new assets and/or upgrades to current assets

LEGISLATION AND POLICY

- **Disaster Management Act 2003**

Section 80 Functions of local government

(1) The functions of a local government under this Act are as follows:

- a) to ensure it has a disaster response capability

(2) In this section:

disaster response capability, for a local government, means the ability to provide equipment and a suitable number of persons, using the resources available to the local government, to effectively deal with, or help another entity to deal with, an emergency situation or a disaster in the local government's area.

CONSULTATION

External Consultation:

- Noosa Shire Council
- Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ)

CONCLUSION

It is recommended that Council resolve to support the proposed Noosa motion to the LGAQ Annual Conference 2026, being "That the LGAQ calls on the Federal Government to provide ongoing funding and coordination for local governments to transition to a suitable flood

monitoring platform that collects, displays and analyses real-time data from rainfall and river level gauges for flood warning and local disaster management.”

The successful outcome of the motion will ensure that local governments have access to a resilient, nationally supported flood monitoring capability that enables local governments to effectively manage increasing flood risk in real-time and protect communities now and into the future.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil