

To: Prime Minister

<b>SUBJECT: Flood Warning Infrastructure Remediation Announcement</b>
<b>MEETING WITH: PMO to advise</b>
<b>TIME/DATE: PMO to advise</b>
<b>VENUE: PMO to advise</b>

### Purpose of Meeting

- Early announcement of the s 34(2) Budget measure. **NOTE: at time of drafting** s 34(3) s 34(3) s 34(2) s 34(3) s 34(3)

### Key Points

- Your office has s47C s 34(2) s47C Background information is at Attachment A.
- If agreed, the measure will provide \$236 million over 10 years from 2023-24 (and \$13.9 million per year ongoing from 2033-34) to the Bureau of Meteorology (the Bureau) for the Australian Government to take ownership of, and upgrade, s47C flood warning assets owned by local governments and some state government entities, across s47C high priority catchments nationally by 2030.
- This will include high priority flood warning assets in Queensland, as one of Australia's most flood prone states, with implementation details to be settled with the Queensland Government.
  - The Ipswich City Council local government area s47C with 45 river and rain gauges, 36 owned by the local council and 9 already owned by the Australian Government.
- s 34(3)
- Early warnings are important for individuals, communities, governments, businesses and others to take action in advance of a flood, such as evacuations, to reduce disaster risks and impacts.
- Remediation of flood warning infrastructure will ensure the Bureau can provide timely and accurate flood forecasts and warnings to emergency managers and all cohorts of the Australian public, to support public safety, productivity and economic security.

- Consolidated ownership will improve warnings and immediate response. Longer-term records will generate data to inform future decision-making on a local and national scale.
- This investment responds to calls for action to address risks in existing gauge networks from communities affected by flooding in 2022.

### **Sensitivities**

- s 47C [REDACTED]
- s 34(3) [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- s 47B(a) [REDACTED]

### **Consultation**

PM&C DIVISIONS— Resilience and Crisis Management

DEPARTMENTS— Bureau of Meteorology

**Matthew Strapp**  
Industry, Infrastructure & Environment  
26 April 2023

Policy Officer: s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

### **Circulation**

PM&C Secretary; Deputy Secretary, Economy, Industry & Resilience, Williams; First Assistant Secretary, Industry, Infrastructure & Environment, Trease; First Assistant Secretary, Resilience and Crisis Management, Quigley; Governance & Corporate Group, Williamson; Chief Financial Officer, Cooper; First Assistant Secretary, Ministerial Support Division, Martin; Assistant Secretary, Environment, Resources & Agriculture, Strapp; Assistant Secretary, Disaster Preparedness, Plans & Incident Management, Crawford  
PMO Chief of Staff; s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
Cabinet Secretary

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

**ATTACHMENT A BACKGROUND**


**ATTACHMENT B LETTER FROM QUEENSLAND**

## Background

- The Commonwealth (through the Bureau) has legislative responsibility under the *Meteorology Act 1955* for issuing riverine flood forecast and warnings. This measure will ensure assets meet the National Flood Warning Infrastructure Standard, supporting the Bureau to deliver these warnings.
- On 16 September 2022, the Hon Steven Miles MP, Deputy Premier of Queensland, wrote to Senator the Hon Murray Watt, Minister for Emergency Management, signalling Queensland's commitment to cost sharing arrangements with the Commonwealth for ongoing maintenance and operations ([Attachment B](#)).
- Three state-based inquiries into the February-March 2022 floods in Queensland and New South Wales made consistent recommendations regarding flood warning infrastructure. In particular, the Queensland Inspector-General of Emergency Management's South East Queensland Rainfall and Flooding Event February to March 2022 Review recommended consolidated ownership and renewed capital and maintenance in the flood warning network.


### 2022 flood impacts on Ipswich City Council local government area

s 22(1)(a)(ii)



- The ongoing impacts of long-term displacement of people, uninhabitable homes and lengthy rebuild processes are key features of recovery efforts going forward.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)





**Hon Steven Miles MP**

Deputy Premier

Minister for State Development, Infrastructure,

Local Government and Planning

Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure

Our ref: MBN22/781

**16 SEP 2022**

Senator the Honourable Murray Watt MP  
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry  
Minister for Emergency Management  
Senator.watt@aph.gov.au

Dear Minister

I am writing to request your consideration and commitment towards Commonwealth investment in Queensland's flood warning infrastructure network (FWIN).

It is essential that the FWIN meets best practice standards to protect Queensland communities from flood into the future. The Bureau of Meteorology (Bureau) has identified significant investment is required to bring the network in Queensland up to the national Flood Warning Infrastructure Standard, to ensure it is complete, fit for purpose and meets future community need

The Bureau, through its scoping study released in late 2021, identified options to address the shortfalls in the current network. I understand the preferred option for the Bureau and Queensland included a Commonwealth investment of \$161 million for capital uplift of the network, as well as taking ownership of all flood warning gauge assets (made up of rainfall and river height gauges) currently owned and managed by local governments.

The Bureau's proposal also included a joint Commonwealth, State and Local Government ongoing commitment to maintenance and operations, asset renewal and supporting governance arrangements for all gauges owned by the Bureau and sought support from the Queensland Government based on a 50:50 cost share.

Sadly, the Commonwealth did not include the \$161 million capital uplift in the 2022-23 Federal Budget, instead provided \$3 million in funding to the Bureau to allow current maintenance arrangements to continue until 30 June 2023.

Since this point, various communications have occurred between the State and Commonwealth, with Senator Bridget McKenzie, then Minister for Emergency Management writing to me on 21 April 2022 stating the \$3 million will enable federal, state, territory and local governments to give further consideration to options for ongoing funding and management arrangements for the national FWIN. I include a copy of this correspondence and my response for your reference.

Queensland would still welcome the Commonwealth's urgent investment in this critical infrastructure, particularly given the level of flooding experienced across the state already this year. Importantly, Queensland has already approved its allocation of funding towards ongoing maintenance and operations in preparation for the Commonwealth favourable consideration.

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The \$3 million investment provided to the Bureau extends the maintenance of more than 600 local government-owned assets beyond its original end date of June 2022, in accordance with the cessation of the *2018 Intergovernmental Agreement on the Provision of Bureau of Meteorology Hazard Services to the States and Territories*.

I am concerned about the additional financial impost on local governments when the current interim arrangements cease. I am also concerned about the flood risk to the parts of the state identified as needing additional rainfall and river level gauge coverage. However, I believe we will be able to come to a solution that places the safety of our community first and is favourable for all levels of government.

As you know, in recent years the Queensland Government has been advocating for, and investing in, flood warning infrastructure in Queensland and we acknowledge and appreciate Commonwealth investment in the network.

The Queensland Government is committed to continue to partner with the Commonwealth on investing in flood warning infrastructure, and again, I would appreciate if you can reconsider and provide a commitment from the Commonwealth for the \$161 million investment in the network.

I would be happy to discuss this matter with you further.

Yours sincerely

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

**STEVEN MILES MP**  
**DEPUTY PREMIER**  
**Minister for State Development,**  
**Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning**  
**Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure**

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