Last week's flooding in Dungog and the Hunter Region serve as a tragic reminder of the need for smarter and more responsible flood risk management in New South Wales.

The Floodplain Management Association (FMA) has been advocating improvements to flood mitigation and land use planning for over 50 years and was established after the 1955 flooding in the Hunter Region.

FMA Chairman, Ian Dinham, said three brave souls were lost last week because individuals were isolated through floodwater, and were not adequately protected from the dangers.

“This loss of life will continue until we start giving priority to wiser land use planning and flood mitigation in our communities” said Mr Dinham.

“The graphic images of flooded homes being washed away are a classic case of buildings being approved in the wrong place.

“Australia needs to ensure these kinds of building approvals never happen again. To do this, government and practitioners must work together to promote wise land use planning.

“Floods cause over $500 million in damages each year in Australia and the FMA advocates a higher priority for investment in flood mitigation measures, such as levees, which pay for themselves over time.

“The savings in flood damages in towns protected by flood levees has paid for the cost of the work many times over. Such examples can be seen in Lismore, the Clarence Valley, the Macleay Valley and Maitland.

“We cannot control the occurrence of extreme natural disasters, but we can mitigate the risks to our communities, and save many lives in the process.

“Last week’s floods will be a matter for serious discussion at the FMA National Conference in Brisbane next month.

“We will have around 400 delegates from across the country and overseas working through floodplain management issues with a view to promoting best practice and safer communities.

“The recent Productivity Commission Inquiry into Natural Disaster Funding will also
be a hot topic as this report recommends an effective reduction in federal government spending on flood damage restoration."

**About**
For more information on the Floodplain Management Association, visit [floods.org.au](http://floods.org.au).

(ENDS)

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