PRESS RELEASE
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Long Road to Flood Recovery

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Damage from the persistent wet weather over New South Wales throughout September highlights the need for improved arrangements for flood repair and recovery.

Floodplain Management Australia (FMA) President Ian Dinham said “With the end of the El Nino we are now seeing the familiar scenario where flooding then occurs. We have flood warnings for 11 New South Wales river systems, 1000 people ordered to evacuate at flood-stricken Forbes, and more rain predicted for the Central West this week. The damage to property and infrastructure is already running to tens of millions of dollars, and the road to recovery for flood affected communities will take years.”

Mr Dinham said FMA has been concerned for some time about the complex eligibility arrangements and lengthy approval process for Councils seeking Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Assistance (NDRRA).

“After floods and storms the community expectation is that Councils manage the clean-up and repair swiftly. Over recent years an increasing number of post-flood activities carried out by Councils have become ineligible for government assistance, and the approvals process is unnecessarily delaying recovery actions.

“Councils are now required to engage private consultants and external contractors to reinstate vital road and other infrastructure to be eligible for NDRRA funding. This can add significantly to the overall costs, as well as prolong interruption and inconvenience for communities and industries.

Mr Dinham said that FMA Members have reported delays of up to 12 months for essential repairs to roads and infrastructure which should be fast-tracked.

“There are also instances in which repeated flood damage could have been avoided if the funding rules had allowed assets to be repaired to better resist future floods.

“Governments need to focus on strategies to reduce future flood losses and community disruption, rather than encourage repeated repair and replacement of public infrastructure to the same standard after each flood”.

Flooding is the most costly, yet manageable of natural disasters with recent estimates costing Australia over $560 million a year.
Floodplain Management Australia brings together experts from across Australia and overseas to help build a more flood resilient nation. Members include over 120 councils, catchment management authorities, businesses, and professionals involved in urban and rural flood risk management.

About
For more information on Floodplain Management Australia, visit floods.org.au.

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