

Monday June 5, 2017

Tasmanian flood review puts much-needed focus on mapping and mitigation

The Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) has backed a recommendation that the Tasmanian Government improve flood mapping and examine mitigation options.

The Independent Review into the Tasmanian Floods of June and July 2016 called on the Government to review existing flood maps, and consider undertaking comprehensive flood mapping of the entire state.

The ICA also welcomed other findings including:

- The flood levees at Launceston North and Northern Midlands Council worked well during the floods
- The Tasmanian Government should explore the need for adaptive strategies and investment in flood mitigation infrastructure
- The Government should examine whether it is not investing enough in mitigation
- Public education about flood dangers should be improved

ICA spokesman Campbell Fuller said the report aligned with the ICA's consistent call for governments to invest more in disaster prevention.

"This report provides valuable insights into ways to protect homes and businesses in the most flood-exposed state in Australia," he said.

"Investments in permanent, well-maintained mitigation – such as Launceston's upgraded levee system – save governments substantial sums in the long term by removing the need to continually rebuild and repair flood-damage.

"Effective mitigation can only take place where the risk is understood. Flood mapping allows communities to identify which areas are exposed to flooding, how often and to what depth. It's a crucial tool to help councils, households and businesses protect themselves.

"Last year's east coast low caused insured losses in Tasmania of about \$60 million, and considerable heartache. Any steps that reduce the risk of a repeat must be seriously examined."

Mr Fuller said the ICA noted the report's comment that insurers needed to ensure their policies were well understood, especially as they related to flood cover.

He said: "Flood cover is available to all homes and businesses, and more than 96 per cent of all household policies purchased now include cover for flooding under the Federal Government's legally binding standard definition. The industry recognises the need for clearer, more engaging policy disclosure and is actively examining how to do this."

-ENDS-