

Opening Statement to the RA Act Review Panel **Natalie Meyer, Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre**

Thank you to the panel for inviting me today.

I wish to open by saying that my understanding of the terms of reference of this review was that it was primarily around the drafting of the legislation, rather than the implementation of the response and recovery efforts by the Reconstruction Authority, under the Act.

In relation to the latter I therefore wish to add the following points:

- 1. The actual time involved in recovery** will vary depending upon the scale and nature of a disaster. Time frames should be tailored around progress rather than arbitrary time periods. **Withdrawal of services should align with recovery progress.**
- 2.** Concerns about specialist support services such as RSS ending before the more complex cases are resolved and people are still displaced or living in temporary pod villages etc.
- 3.** Funding NGOs especially Neighbourhood Centres to deliver the Recovery Support Services was **a great idea** and definitely helped people to access support.
- 4.** The **'no wrong door'** approach between RSS providers across the region was also very helpful for displaced residents.
- 5.** The RA staff we have worked with as RSS providers have been mostly **helpful and supportive.**
- 6.** Important for key **staff to have continuity** in communities to build trust and relationships – including **between disasters**; high staff turnaround or instability is problematic when dealing with traumatised people.
- 7.** Outside of the RSS, **improved communications** between community and response and recovery agencies is needed to **maximise the efficiency** of resource application (example in our case – Geotechnical Engineers not Structural Engineers!). E.g. **CRN (Community Resilience Network)** example in the Lismore/Kyogle/Richmond Valley **Local Emergency Management Plan structure.**
- 8. Skills gaps** (e.g. geotechs, builders) has been a major issue in our area.

Landslip and Rural Land sharing Communities (aka 'MOs') have really struggled to get support. The Landslip and Large Lot (which includes Rural Land sharing Communities) policies have finally been released in relation to the RHP, but sadly do not help many of our community members.

The lack of equity between people impacted by landslips vs people impacted by flood inundation has been problematic, as is the potential for inequity created within Rural Land sharing communities as a result of the recently released policy.

Thank you, Natalie Meyer