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MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Impending severe weather in Far North Queensland highlights need to protect free access to BOM data for councils and strata communities

As Far North Queensland prepares for worsening weather conditions, including heavy rainfall and the potential for flooding, the strata sector has joined calls from the Local Government Association of Queensland for the Bureau of Meteorology to ensure councils are not charged to access critical real-time weather data needed to keep communities safe.

With communities across FNQ monitoring conditions closely, accurate and timely Bureau information is central to issuing warnings, planning evacuations and coordinating emergency response, particularly in regions with high numbers of people living in strata communities.

Laura Bos, General Manager of Strata Community Association Queensland, said real-time data from the Bureau of Meteorology was essential as councils, emergency services and communities prepared for potential severe weather impacts.

“As councils and emergency services monitor rapidly changing conditions in Far North Queensland, access to accurate, real-time Bureau data is fundamental to making urgent decisions about warnings, evacuations and community safety,” Ms Bos said.

“Any barrier to that information, whether financial or technical, directly increases risk at a time when communities need certainty, clarity and confidence.”

Ms Bos said the implications were particularly significant for strata communities, which often house large numbers of residents within a single building or complex.

“In emergency situations, strata communities are unique. We can be talking about hundreds of people living within one footprint,” she said. “Timely warnings are critical to ensure evacuations can occur safely, calmly and in an orderly way, especially as severe weather approaches.”

In Far North Queensland, strata buildings frequently include basements, car parks, lifts and shared infrastructure that are vulnerable during heavy rainfall and flooding. Ms Bos said delays or gaps in information could place residents and first responders in difficult and dangerous situations.

“When weather systems intensify quickly, strata buildings face heightened risk. Delayed or incomplete information can compromise resident safety and make emergency response more complex.”

Queensland is Australia’s most disaster-prone state, with local councils playing a frontline role in disaster preparedness, response and recovery. Ms Bos said access to real-time weather and river data must remain a public good.

“Councils work alongside emergency services and local stakeholders, including strata managers and building committees, to protect lives and property,” she said. “They should not be charged to access information that is essential to doing that job, particularly during active weather events.”

Ms Bos said the approaching weather in FNQ reinforced the need for reliable, complete and freely accessible monitoring and warning systems.

“For residents living in strata, particularly older people, people with disability and families, reliable and timely information reduces anxiety and allows people to act early rather than react in crisis,” she said. “That is what effective disaster management looks like.”

The strata sector strongly supports LGAQ’s call for a change of approach to ensure councils retain free access to real-time Bureau data, as Far North Queensland and other regions brace for a challenging weather season.

“With severe weather imminent in FNQ, the priority must be strengthening our disaster warning systems, not introducing new barriers,” Ms Bos said. “Access to accurate, real-time information underpins community safety, resilience and trust

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About SCAQ

Strata Community Association (Qld) is the peak industry organisation for professional body corporate and community title management in Queensland.

SCAQ represents the interests of professional body corporate managers, support staff, and suppliers to the industry through advocacy and law reform, education and professional development, community building and engagement.

Our community supports the management of some \$250 Billion in property assets in Queensland and generates more than \$1.75 billion annually in economic activity, through professional services and maintenance, supporting more than 62,000 direct and indirect jobs for Queenslanders.