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D E Fisher
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WASHED AWAY – PEOPLE AND BUILDINGS DURING TROPICAL CYCLONES: ARE QUEENSLAND STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT POLICIES DOING ENOUGH?

Jonathan Nott
Coastal development in tropical Queensland is being allowed to occur in areas that are prone to catastrophic marine flooding and erosion during intense tropical cyclones. The dangers of allowing development this close to the sea is recognised and accounted for in policies in the United States and Western Australia. However, Queensland government policies recommend building at elevations that are 1-2 m lower than the total ocean inundation occurring during the 1 in 100 year tropical cyclone. Furthermore, Queensland policies also allow development to occur at distances 100 m or more too close to the shore, where buildings can be attacked and undermined by waves. This is not so in the United States or Western Australia, where, in the case of the former, coastal lands are mapped into different zones based upon their susceptibility to wave induced attack and erosion, and property owners are encouraged to insure against such risks. US citizens are also made aware of these risks through the differential insurance premiums based upon the level of exposure of their property to wave impacts during tropical cyclones (hurricanes). Queensland needs to ‘catch up’ with the United States, and other Australian states by recognising and accounting for the full range of natural processes that pose a hazard to people and buildings during intense tropical cyclones..............................................227
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