

Media Release  
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## New Building Guidelines Good Advice

Queensland planning professionals are urging builders and home owners to study new home construction guidelines for communities in cyclone prone areas.

The Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) said the document drawn up after Cyclone Yasi, is the only one of its kind in Australia and offers practical advice in planning for storm surge.

PIA Queensland President Greg Tupicoff said while the guidelines are not yet part of compulsory building codes, they offer a common sense approach to building in vulnerable areas.

"There are a number of things people can do to protect their homes from damage caused by major weather events, and it makes sense to comply with them even before they become compulsory," Mr Tupicoff said.

"One section deals with the water forces from a storm tide surge and advises homeowners not to enclose the underneath part of the house.

"Fixed wall structures help transfer water forces into the structural frame of the home, so the guidelines suggest these should either be avoided or designed so they can be removed easily to allow flow through water movement."

The storm surge building guidelines were developed in partnership with James Cook University's Cyclone Testing Station, the CSIRO, and architects.

Mr Tupicoff said while many of the suggestions are more commonsense than science, there are valuable engineering based lessons to be learnt.

"The advice is not to build single level dwelling on concrete slabs in these areas but the guidelines show how the footings should be done if this type of construction cannot be avoided. Deep footings around the perimeter of the slab can help avoid water undermining the slab.

"Guidelines also suggest that internal staircases in multi level dwellings be designed in such a way that furniture can be easily transferred from lower to upper levels.

"Queensland has a long history of damage from storm tide surge and the guidelines released by the State Government may well become compulsory as building codes are upgraded in the wake of 'Yasi'."

The worst storm tide to impact the east-coast of Queensland was caused by Cyclone Mahina in 1899 in Princess Charlotte Bay on Cape York Peninsular.

The estimated highest water level was reported to be around 14m above sea level and extended inland approximately five kilometres, sinking more than 100 vessels and taking more than 400 lives.

Forecasters says it's too early to predict what might happen in the cyclone season in north Queensland for 2011- 2012.

Details of the storm surge guidelines can be found at [www.qldreconstruction.org.au](http://www.qldreconstruction.org.au)

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