



BUSINESS PAPER

Late Reports

Ordinary Council Meeting

15 November 2022

Order Of Business

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8 MAYORAL REPORT**8.2 MAYORAL REPORT - FLOODS****Document ID: 643027****Author: Mayor****Theme: 2 - Our Environment****Attachments: Nil****RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

1. Resolves a formal “thank you” to the many emergency services, utility personnel, Council staff and volunteers involved in the flood emergency.
2. Prepares and lodges submissions to the NSW Government seeking support for routine flood damage repairs, but also highlighting the importance of betterment to the Newell and Sturt Highways and the Narrandera water supply and stormwater systems.
3. Authorises the Mayor and General Manager to lobby the State and Federal Governments for funding for the upgrades.

BACKGROUND

Narrandera Shire continues to experience flooding across its entire length and breadth with significant damage to public and private infrastructure, inconvenience to the traveling public and devastation for many farmers.

Heavy rain across the catchment coupled with near record releases from Burrinjuck and Blowering Dams have combined to cause river and creek levels to rise and remain high.

Both the Sturt and Newell Highways remain closed, as do a number of local roads throughout the Shire.

Narrandera Shire was added to the list of local government areas issued with natural disaster declarations, following on from the declaration issued in August allowing councils, communities, and individuals to access a range of special assistance measures.

Floods

The Murrumbidgee River at Narrandera peaked at 8.49m late on Wednesday afternoon, 9 November 2022 and has been slowly receding since then. Following heavy rains in the catchment, Mirrool Creek caused flooding in the north of the Shire.

Approximately 16 dwellings, mainly in the Gillenbah area, were evacuated and in the end a number of these were subsequently inundated. Residents were relocated to stay with family and friends. Once the water has retreated sufficiently, the clean-up will begin. Whilst not actually evacuating, a larger number of dwellings were effectively isolated during the event with support provided by emergency services to residents who remained in place.

When the flood level in the Murrumbidgee exceeds 7.00m, the syphon located at the end of the main stormwater drain behind Larmer Street must be closed, preventing automatic

access of local stormwater into the wetlands. With the cooperation of Murrumbidgee Irrigation (MI), Council staff installed pumps and created a temporary breach of the canal bank to overcome this issue. Unfortunately, following a couple of heavy rain events, some stormwater entered the lower end of a number of properties inundating sheds and contents.

Roads – Closures

Highways: Newell Highway from Narrandera to Jerilderie, Sturt Highway from Wagga to Darlington Point. The closure of these highways has had a devastating impact on the many businesses in Narrandera and Gillenbah that depend on the highways for trade.

Roads/Areas: Bandys Road between MR84 and Ellis Road; Brewery Flat Camping Grounds; Buckingbong Road at Brewarrana Bridge and Buckingbong Road between the Fisheries and Dellapool Road; Curtis, Ellis, Erigolia, and Gap Roads; Geddes Road between Euratha and Stephenson's Roads; Hankinson Street between Woolscour Road and Sugden Street; Hulmes Road, Landervale Road from Kamarah Road to Newell Highway; Lizard Drive; Mannings Road at the causeway; McDonnells and McLays Roads; Middle Road between Hulmes and McDonnells Roads; Oakbank Street; Old Narrandera, and Pinehope Roads; Sugden Street; Stephenson's Road north of Binya; Tahmoor Road; Town Beach Entry, and Woolscour Road.

Irrigation Way: suffered inundation and was closed to light traffic for a period.

Council staff have been busy with running repairs to all roads, fixing potholes and failures as they have occurred and as allowed by the weather. A comprehensive flood damage claim will be prepared and submitted to NSW State government in the near future.

Unlike past emergencies, Council has been asked to identify projects that would improve the community's ability to deal with flood events in the future. A preliminary submission has already been made highlighting the lifting of sections of the Sturt and Newell Highways to major flood level and the upgrade of the town stormwater system.

Water Supply

Unfortunately, at the height of the flood, contaminated water entered the Narrandera water supply causing chlorine levels to fall rapidly. Following consultation with NSW Health, a boiled water alert was issued, and residents were advised to take precautions before drinking and/or cooking with the water. It was believed that the flood waters had penetrated the aquifers which sourced the supply.

Staff have subsequently been able to access the bores, clear them of flood water and restore chlorine levels to safe water standards. The alert will need to stay in place until comprehensive testing confirms that the water no longer needs to be boiled.

Further flood-proofing of the bores will be included in Council's application for flood betterment projects.

Emergency Services

I would like to place on record Council's and the community's most sincere appreciation for all the efforts that went into keeping our residents safe during this flood event. I include Council staff in that thank you, as many of them have worked extremely long hours during the emergency.

The assistance that has been provided to evacuees, folk isolated, motorists and the farming community generally has been tremendous and much of it from volunteers.

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