



# Ordinary Meeting

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## Late Supplementary

Date of meeting: 15 November 2022  
Location: Council Chambers  
Time: 6:30 p.m.

**BUSINESS PAPER**



**ORDINARY MEETING**

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**LATE SUPPLEMENTARY**

**SECTION 2 – Mayoral Minutes**

**Item: 197**                      **MM - Immediate Flood Mitigation, Flood Recovery and Flood Resilience in the Hawkesbury - (138879)**

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**BACKGROUND:**

There can be no doubt that the Hawkesbury has suffered greatly due to floods over the last few years. Our community is centred around the beautiful, yet dangerous Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley Floodplain, one of the most hazardous floodplains within NSW, if not all of Australia. We have endured a total of six floods recently, which has had a measurable and dramatically negative impact on many homes, businesses, farmers, our local infrastructure such as roads and public space, and most importantly, our mental health. We are tired, exhausted and in need of assistance to build our community back to the expected standards.

During this time, our Council staff have been working above and beyond what would normally be expected of them in their daily duties, as they add large-scale, ongoing flood recovery projects to their schedules. This includes filling thousands upon thousands of potholes, designing entire new roads, engaging and managing external contractors, project managing significant damage to infrastructure and attending to hundreds of hours of flood recovery programs in our community.

What has resulted is an unacceptable situation; dealing with the scale of these ongoing and repeated natural disasters, and their financial impacts, are beyond our capacity as a small, metropolitan fringe Council. We know we are not alone and appreciate that many Council areas in NSW are experiencing the same impacts and the same problems. And as we sit here tonight, our thoughts go out to the communities of the Central West and particularly those in Eugowra, Forbes, Cowra and the many communities facing their own flood emergencies.

However, here in the Hawkesbury, our needs can be differentiated because we have been calling for help for some time now, due to the fact that we have been flooded so often. That request for assistance has escalated of late, with a series of letters to the NSW Government. This Mayoral Minute has been designed to kindly offer the Premier of NSW the chance to come to the Hawkesbury in person, to discuss the outstanding issues and inform our Council of the Government's response to these requests.

Before I list the items that we have been seeking immediate assistance for, I do wish to reiterate that as a Council, we welcome the acceleration of the raising of the Warragamba Dam wall as Critical Significant State Infrastructure and a recent desire by the NSW Government to fund the project. We do not want to see this project, which independent experts demonstrate will offer our community a higher level of flood mitigation, shelved again. Yet, we must acknowledge that this is a long-term strategy and that what we do also require, is immediate help now. (This Mayoral Minute does not intend to debate the Warragamba Dam wall raising, yet simply note that it is Council's current resolved position to support it).

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The table below has been provided as a summary of the current status quo, in approximate date order of Council's requests:

<b>Long term flood mitigation:</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Council Request</b>	<b>NSW Government Response</b>
Ongoing	<p><i>Raising of Warragamba Dam Wall:</i></p> <p>Council supports the raising of the Warragamba Dam wall to mitigate flood risks.</p>	NSW Government declared the project to be 'Critical State Infrastructure', and NSW Government has agreed to fund alone if no support from Australian Government.
<b>Immediate term flood mitigation, flood recovery and flood resilience:</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Council Request</b>	<b>NSW Government Response</b>
Ongoing since 2021  July 2022	<p><i>Riverbank Restoration:</i></p> <p>Request to change planning laws to make it simpler, faster and cheaper, for low impact riverbank restoration due to flood damage. Council have drafted a planning proposal that has been sent to the NSW Government to expediate the process.</p>	No revised planning provisions are in place and have informed that any changes unlikely before 2023.
Ongoing since 2021	<p><i>Repair of Cornwallis Drain:</i></p> <p>Request for funding under the Disaster Funding Recovery Arrangements. Council have concluded the design works and are waiting for a funding agreement to go to tender.</p> <p>Urgency also recognised as Recommendation No. 34 of the NSW Parliamentary Select Committee on the response to Major Flooding across NSW in 2022, which states: <i>"That the NSW Government provide immediate support to the Hawkesbury City Council to remediate the riverbank erosion affecting Cornwallis Road, Cornwallis without any further delay."</i></p>	<p>Currently in discussions with Council staff regarding funding arrangements, as it is unlikely to be fully funded by the DRFA. We have been informed that a special request of government is likely required.</p> <p>The NSW Government has responded broadly however, as part of their response to the Committee:</p> <p><i>"Supported in principle – further work required on implementation The NSW Government has established a Riverbank Erosion Taskforce to help address a request from Hawkesbury Shire Council to remediate riverbank erosion, including that affecting Cornwallis Road. The Taskforce is currently considering the best way to achieve this."</i></p>
May 2022	<p><i>Ability for Council to apply an emergency management charge:</i></p> <p>Council wrote to the Minister for Local Government on 10 May 2022 seeking for the ability to levy a modest charge of \$15 per household to fund community resilience and emergency response, in the same manner that Blue Mountains City Council does.</p>	Request declined by Minister on 23 September 2022.

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<b>Date</b>	<b>Council Request</b>	<b>NSW Government Response</b>
July 2022	<p><i>Request for an additional \$3 million to fund repairs of parks, reserves and Council-owned riverbanks</i></p> <p>Council wrote to Premier on 14 July 2022 seeking additional funding following the devastating impacts of the July 2022 flood on Council's parks and reserves.</p>	<p>Premier referred to the Minister for Emergency Services to arrange meeting.</p> <p>The Minister's office called to arrange a meeting, but it has not yet taken place.</p>
July 2022	<p><i>Use of Warragamba Dam for immediate flood mitigation</i></p> <p>Council wrote to the Minister on 22 July 2022 calling for the dam to be used immediately for flood mitigation and seeking an urgent meeting with the Minister.</p>	<p>Meeting with the Minister 13 October 2022.</p> <p>NSW Government has not indicated support for this approach.</p>
August 2022	<p><i>'Betterment funding' to improve the resilience of Council's assets to future disasters.</i></p> <p>Joint letter on 17 August 2022 to Australian Government Minister from Hawkesbury, Blue Mountains and Penrith City Councils seeking access to funding to 'build back better'.</p>	<p>Joint Australian &amp; NSW Government program.</p> <p>\$200 million shared amongst 91 Councils and NSW Government Departments, up to a maximum of \$10 million.</p> <p>\$10 million is insufficient for the Hawkesbury and does not acknowledge our unique circumstances and repeated natural disaster events compared other lesser-affected Council areas.</p>
August 2022	<p><i>Request to fund or deliver immediate repairs to the Pitt Town Evacuation Route</i></p> <p>Council wrote to the Ministers on 30 August 2022 seeking \$9 million for urgent safety upgrades.</p> <p>Urgency also recognised as Recommendation No. 12 of the NSW Parliamentary Select Committee on the response to Major Flooding across NSW in 2022, which states: "That the NSW Government allocated funding to the improvement of the Pitt Town Evacuation Route and other key possible evacuation routes in Sydney's northwest."</p>	<p>There has been no response to our letter, but a broader response was released as part of the NSW Government Response to the Committee:</p> <p><i>"Supported in principle – further work required on implementation The NSW Government has already commenced work to improve the Pitt Town evacuation route, as part of the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley Flood Risk Management Strategy. This includes the installation of new flood evacuation signage. As part of the Road Resilience Program, Infrastructure NSW and Transport for NSW are working to improve flood resilience of the existing evacuation network."</i></p>

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Date	Council Request	NSW Government Response
August 2022	<p><i>Expedited delivery of improvements to evacuation routes in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley; and a request to review routes in light of recent floods</i></p> <p>Council wrote to the Minister on 30 August 2022 seeking to bring forward improvements to the evacuation routes (from late 2025)</p> <p>Urgency also recognised as Recommendation No. 12 of the NSW Parliamentary Select Committee on the response to Major Flooding across NSW in 2022, which states: <i>“That the NSW Government allocated funding to the improvement of the Pitt Town Evacuation Route and other key possible evacuation routes in Sydney’s northwest.”</i></p>	<p>There has been no response to our letter, but a broader response was released as part of the NSW Government Response to the Committee:</p> <p><i>“Supported in principle – further work required on implementation</i>  <i>The NSW Government has already commenced work to improve the Pitt Town evacuation route, as part of the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley Flood Risk Management Strategy. This includes the installation of new flood evacuation signage.</i>  <i>As part of the Road Resilience Program, Infrastructure NSW and Transport for NSW are working to improve flood resilience of the existing evacuation network.”</i></p>
November 2022	<p><i>Inclusion in the \$50 million pothole repair program</i></p> <p>A joint letter was prepared with Wollondilly and Blue Mountains Council and issued to the NSW Government on 3 November 2022, seeking inclusion in the program.</p>	<p>No response to date, although only recently sent.</p>
November 2022	<p><i>Inclusion of Hawkesbury Nepean-Valley in flood liable land buy-backs and grants</i></p> <p>Mayor wrote to the Premier on 3 November 2022 seeking that the NSW Government consult with the Hawkesbury community regarding the option of buybacks for flood liable land.</p>	<p>No response to date, although only recently sent.</p>

In addition to the above, we would request that the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements are expedited to all NSW Councils, including advanced pre-payments or progress payments. This is due to councils having to pay the invoices for flood recovery works being completed locally, yet encountering a large gap of time before that money is returned to us. Our current estimates are around \$230 million. Hawkesbury City Council simply does not have endless pools of funds to continue to pay our contractors, so it is requested that councils are pre-paid and/or reimbursed in a more timely manner, to avoid a potential cash flow crises.

In essence, the above table demonstrates the advocacy that Hawkesbury City Council has continued to engage in, on behalf of our community. Whilst we will continue to improve, encourage and educate our community on flood danger, flood preparedness and flood resilience, we will also continue to be strong voices for a higher level of government assistance. That is why, in addition to our ongoing requests, we



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kindly ask that the NSW Premier come to the Hawkesbury, meet with us and discuss, in good faith, these outstanding issues.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Council:

1. Write to the Premier of NSW, the Hon Dominic Perrottet MP, requesting his personal attendance at a meeting to be held in the Hawkesbury as soon as possible, to discuss Hawkesbury City Council's requests for immediate flood mitigation, flood recovery and flood resilience (listed below);
2. Invite the State Member for Hawkesbury, Robyn Preston MP, to this meeting.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

There are no supporting documents for this report.

**oooO END OF MAYORAL MINUTE Oooo**



Ordinary  
meeting

End of  
Late Supplementary  
Business  
Paper

This business paper has  
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