



ORDINARY MEETING

Late Supplementary

Date of meeting: 9 April 2024
Location: Council Chambers
Time: 6:30 PM

BUSINESS PAPER

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3. MAYORAL MINUTES

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3. MAYORAL MINUTES

3.1.1. MM – Flood Mitigation in the Hawkesbury

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Acknowledge the devastating consequences of the flood event over the weekend across the Hawkesbury for residents, farmers, small business owners and local sporting groups, as well as the damaging emotional, social and economic impacts that are associated with such a natural disaster.
 2. Recognise the response by the State and Commonwealth Governments to declare the Hawkesbury a Natural Disaster Area, allowing financial assistance to flow to those affected, and in addition acknowledge the NSW Environmental Protection Agency for waiving the waste levy for 90 days and the speed with which this decision was made.
 3. Write to the NSW Premier Chris Minns to request an urgent meeting in the Hawkesbury with the Mayor, State MP for Hawkesbury and Federal MP for Macquarie, to discuss short and long term flood mitigation options for the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley floodplain, as well as a broad discussion around water policy and any necessary legislative changes that may assist with immediate mitigation.
 4. Write to the Minister for Transport, Jo Haylen, to request an urgent response as to why the safety rails on Richmond Bridge were once again not lowered before the Bridge went underwater and seek assurances that adequate plans are in place to prevent this from occurring again.
 5. Extend our gratitude to the relevant agencies for their assistance during this crisis, including the NSW State Emergency Service, NSW Police, NSW Rural Fire Service, NSW Fire and Rescue, NSW Ambulance and Department of Communities and Justice and associated volunteers, as well as Hawkesbury City Council staff and other response agencies from the NSW Government. We would also like to thank the Hawkesbury community for their preparedness, diligent community spirit, ongoing resilience and for following official advice as the crisis unfolded.
 6. Continue our advocacy in expediting construction of the Grose River Crossing and the Richmond Bridge Duplication.
 7. Assist the community in recovering from this natural disaster by supporting residents through:
 - a) The waiving of interest on overdue Rates and Annual Charges on flood impacted properties, for a period of six months, ending 31 October 2024.
 - b) The cessation of debt recovery activity on flood impacted properties, for a period of six months, ending 31 October 2024.
 - c) The waiving of tipping fees for 90 days in relation to green-waste generated by flood activity from residential and urban properties.
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BACKGROUND

On Friday, 5 April 2024, a significant weather event resulted in a substantial amount of rain falling over the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley floodplain and its catchment. By Saturday morning, the

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Hawkesbury River had risen quickly and the Yarramundi and Richmond Bridges were under water and closed, causing community disruption.

As the River broke its banks and additional water spilled from Warragamba Dam, farmers and residents in low lying areas of the Hawkesbury experienced distress and anxiety as their properties became inundated. Livestock needed to be transported and crops were destroyed. People received evacuation orders to leave their homes and businesses, roads and sporting facilities were inundated, with the impacts only now starting to be understood as the flood waters recede.

This event was the seventh flood that has occurred in our area in four years. We acknowledge that we live and work, on and around a floodplain, however this does not mean that our community should continue to suffer. We need urgent flood mitigation measures to be implemented to reduce the risk to lives and livelihoods on the floodplain and we request a meeting with the NSW Premier to immediately engage in this conversation.

In addition, given the damage caused to the railings on Richmond Bridge, an urgent letter must be sent to the Minister for Transport, asking why the railings were not lowered in time, which resulted in a significant buildup of debris and completely destroyed the railings, requiring another expensive replacement.

Also, to assist the community in recovering from this natural disaster, it is proposed to support residents of flood impacted properties through the waiving of interest on overdue rates and annual charges, cessation of debt recovery activity and the waiving of tipping fees relating to green-waste generated by flood activity from residential and urban properties. With respect to general flood waste, as with previous events we anticipate that the costs of the immediate cleanup for those impacted properties will be covered by the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

The Hawkesbury has another large clean up and recovery ahead, with further destruction caused to vital community infrastructure including roads, parks and sporting fields. We ask our community to be patient while we undertake the task of rectifying this damage.

oooO END OF MAYORAL MINUTE Oooo



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End of Business Paper

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