

8.2. Mayoral Minute - 24/01/2022 - Recent Storm and Flooding Event

Report by Mayor – Councillor Maree Statham

Commentary

On Tuesday 11th January 2022, a large rain event hit Lithgow and Wallerawang causing major flooding of roads and buildings. Initial estimates rate the event as a 1 in 1000 year rain event and this gives an indication as to why the impact was widespread across private and public assets.

In Lithgow, Main Street was flooded in 2 sections between Enfield Avenue and Calero Street with up to a metre of water flowing across Main Street. Many businesses in the Lithgow area experienced extensive flooding in their buildings, extensive stock losses, building damage and disruption to business. Many houses were inundated with damage to floorings and furnishings.

In Wallerawang, the impact area was more localised with a river of water flowing down Rydal Road and across Pipers Flat Road with property damage in that immediate area.

Council immediately pursued a Declaration of Natural Disaster. This has been approved and this will provide support for Council, businesses and residents as clean-up and rebuilding takes place.

The cost of damage to Council assets will likely be over \$1million. The total cost of the damage will be much greater when you include the damage to privately property.

There is little that can be done to prevent the damage caused by this size event. Stormwater assets were flowing to capacity and the overland flow paths were exceeding their design limits. All of this combined with Farmers Creek flowing at an extremely high level meant there was nowhere for the water to go.

I want to acknowledge the work of Council staff, as well as other first responders such as the police and SES. When the various issues caused by the rain event in Lithgow and Wallerawang started to present, Council staff stepped up and did whatever was required to make the streets as safe as possible. This included road closures, barricading dangerous areas, inspecting areas as calls were received and working in with Emergency Services as needed. Council staff were key in protecting the public, going to the extent of rescuing a driver trapped in the flood waters. Council supplied sand to the SES for sandbagging and worked in with requests from the community to help with flooding issues where they could.

The next few days were spent patching and assessing roads, assessing and clearing stormwater drains, assessing and responding to damage on building assets. By Friday afternoon the roads and stormwater drains were patched and cleared, buildings were cleaned and repairs had been started and plans for more extensive works are underway.

One of the main impacts was a collapse in a 40-metre section of the retaining wall on the banks of Farmers Creek. This was not due to the high flow in the creek but the flow of water across Glanmire Oval. The retaining wall was not designed to withstand waterflows of this magnitude from Glanmire Oval but to protect the embankment from the flow in Farmers Creek.

Council is now looking at the following plans to further protect our built environment from these events:

- improve the flow of water to Farmers Creek and away from built up areas of Lithgow by improving or expanding the stormwater system
- As assets are repaired, they will be armoured against events of this nature where possible

- Improving drainage under Pipers Flat Road, in the vicinity of Rydal Road, to avoid water flowing across the road
- Additional drainage around certain buildings that are susceptible to flooding.

Council will work with State or Federal grant programs to ensure that new or improved stormwater assets are constructed to a higher capacity to help to avoid these events having such a detrimental impact. I look forward to these governments assisting Council, as they have done in the past.

Attachments

1. Natural Disaster Declaration

2. Disaster declaration media release

Recommendation


This Mayoral Minute about the recent flood event be received.



**Resilience
NSW**

D22/173

NOTICE OF NATURAL DISASTER DECLARATION

Notification Type	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initial Notification <input type="checkbox"/> Updated
Name of disaster event	Lithgow severe storm and flooding on 11 January 2022
Australian Government Registration Number (AGRN)	AGRN 996
Combat Agency event reference numbers	SES Event 218/2122
Date event started	11 January 2022
Local Government Areas included (full list)	Lithgow City
Date of Media Release for this event	18 January 2022
Media Release Attached	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Additional Information	Nil
Prepared by	Jillian Suggate Manager, Partnerships & Engagement Resilience NSW
Authorised by (signed and dated)	 Simon Davis Director, Operational Coordination Resilience NSW 18 January 2021



SENATOR THE HON BRIDGET MCKENZIE
MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND NATIONAL
RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

THE HON ANDREW GEE MP
MINISTER FOR VETERANS' AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE PERSONNEL
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR CALARE



THE HON PAUL TOOLE MP
DEPUTY PREMIER OF NEW SOUTH WALES
NEW SOUTH WALES MINISTER FOR REGIONAL NEW SOUTH
WALES AND MINISTER FOR POLICE
STATE MEMBER FOR BATHURST

THE HON STEPH COOKE MP
NEW SOUTH WALES MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES AND
RESILIENCE

Tuesday 18 January 2022

DISASTER ASSISTANCE EXTENDED FOLLOWING SEVERE WEATHER AND
FLOODING IN LITHGOW

Disaster assistance is now available in the Lithgow local government area, following severe storms and flash flooding on 11 January 2022.

Assistance is being provided through the jointly funded Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience, Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie, said the storm event had caused significant damage during a short period of intense rainfall.

“While the storm event passed quickly, the heavy rainfall, severe winds and flash flooding have caused significant disruption in the Lithgow and Wallerawang communities in particular,” Minister McKenzie said.

Member for Calare and Minister for Veterans’ Affairs and Defence Personnel, Andrew Gee, said it’s been an incredibly tough couple of years for the whole Lithgow area.

“We’ve had drought, the bushfires, a mouse plague, the COVID-19 pandemic, and more recently, storms and floods. However, when the chips are down, Lithgow and its surrounding districts come together and pull through,” Mr Gee said.

“I’m really pleased that the State and Federal Governments have swung into gear so quickly to make disaster relief available following the extreme rainfall event.”

Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales and Member for Bathurst Paul Toole said the assistance would allow residents and business owners to move forward and get back on their feet.

“Lithgow was lashed by almost a month’s worth of rain in just an hour that day, inundating homes and businesses with little warning. This assistance will help those affected return to normal as soon as possible,” Mr Toole said.

New South Wales Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, Steph Cooke, said the assistance will support members of the community who experienced damage to their homes, while also assisting Lithgow City Council with repairs to damaged roads.

“Financial support, concessional loans and freight subsidies are now available to those who were hard hit by last week’s severe storms and flash flooding,” Ms Cooke said.

Assistance available under the DRFA may include:

- Help for eligible people whose homes or belongings have been damaged (eligibility criteria apply);
- Support for affected local councils to help with the costs of cleaning up and restoring damaged essential public assets;
- Concessional interest rate loans for small businesses, primary producers and non-profit organisations; and
- Freight subsidies for primary producers.

For information on personal hardship and distress assistance, contact Service NSW on 13 77 88.

To apply for a concessional loan, contact the NSW Rural Assistance Authority on 1800 678 593 or visit www.raa.nsw.gov.au

Information on disaster assistance can be found on the Australian Government's Disaster Assist website at www.disasterassist.gov.au

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