

Minutes of the Floodplain Management Committee Meeting held Thursday 24 November 2022

Venue:

Council Chambers, Murwillumbah Civic & Cultural Centre

Time:

9.15am

Present:

Robert Quirk (Chair), Cr Meredith Dennis, Danny Rose (TSC), Leon McLean (TSC), David Oxenham (TSC), Angie Cousens (TSC), Michelle Bernabe-Salazer (TSC, online), Steven Smith, Samuel Dawson, Thomas Rehfeld, Jenna Ford, Jennifer Kidd, David Bartlett, Peter Mair (SES, online)

Disclosure of Interest:

David Bartlett declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 10.

Agenda Items:

1. Acknowledgement of Country (Chair – Robert Quirk)

2. Apologies and Minutes (RQ)

Apologies: Chris Cherry (Mayor), Martin Rose (DPIE) Felicia Cecil, Max Boyd (Deputy Chair)

Minutes of Previous Meeting: 28 October 2022

Moved: Steven Smith

Seconded: Samuel Dawson

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Floodplain Management Committee meeting held 28 October 2022 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings of that meeting.

3. Business Arising (RQ)

Nominate an alternate – none received since last meeting for community members. Peter Mair nominated Jack Frost as his alternate delegate.

Committee members who had not returned their acknowledgement of the code of conduct were asked to do so as soon as possible.

4. Floodplain Management Studies and Strategies to date (LM)

LM took the committee through the current Flood Studies, Floodplain Risk Management Studies and Plans. Catchment scale studies and plans for the Tweed Valley and for the Tweed Coastal Creeks were covered.

Also covered were the Local Area Floodplain Risk Management Studies and Plan (Murwillumbah), the Murwillumbah CBD Levee & Drainage Study (2018) and the South Murwillumbah Floodplain Risk Management Study (2019).

These documents can be viewed here: <https://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/property-rates/floods-stormwater/flood-risk-management>

RQ: Murwillumbah CBD - river impacts in CBD, how quickly would it drain away – still 5 days?
LM explained that drawdown has generally matched the river in both real and modelled events.
DR explained that the design of flood mitigation to a certain event – 100-year event, so study looked at the impacts of larger floods and levee overtopping.

5. Current Floodplain Management Projects and Priorities (LM)

Tweed Valley Flood Study Update and Expansion:

- Update 2009 Flood Study to modern standards.
- Expand the Study's coverage out into the hinterland & rural areas.
- Incorporate "Australia Rainfall and Runoff 2019" Guidance.
- Take advantage of recent flood modelling software improvements.
- Include the February 2022 event.
- Current Status: Re-Calibration state (once a draft report is available it will be brought to the Committee).
- Completion expected mid-2023.

Murwillumbah CBD Levee Spillway Upgrade:

- Recommendation of the Murwillumbah CBD Levee and Drainage study.
- Reconfigure Murwillumbah CBD earth section to include spillway.
- Rehabilitate earth levee.
- Status: Concept design complete. Detailed design pending.

Addendum to Murwillumbah CBD Levee & Drainage Study:

- Revisit pump station augmentations.
- Establish evidence base for future upgrades.
- Support applications for future grant opportunities.
- DRRF (Disaster Resilience & Recovery Fund).

RQ: Cane industry uses smaller duty pumps that kick in straight away, then larger pumps.

Tweed Heads South Levee & Drainage Study:

- A new Local Flood Risk Management Study/Plan.
- Tweed's largest Business & Economic Hub.
- Protected only by a 1 in 20 AEP levee (moderate flooding).
- Vulnerable to coastal Storm Surge flooding.
- Look closer at levee raising and extensions.
- Status – Funded – scoping phase.
- Work expected to start early 2023.

Voluntary House Purchase and Voluntary House Raising:

- VHP - 91-95 River Street, South Murwillumbah purchased in 2022, Over \$5million spent since 2017, Future unclear (Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation (NRRC) - Resilient Homes Program).

VHR - 2 x house fully approved and in progress, another 4 x houses preliminary approved and in progress, Future unclear (NRRC - Resilient Homes Program)

Council's future in these schemes not known at this stage.

JK: Do we have any idea of how much will be set aside by NRRC for Tweed, do we need to do more to ensure Tweed gets a fair share?

DR: Council at all levels has been on the front foot on both programs with providing NRRC with data and information. TSC has progressed much further than other Councils, from those affected in the events earlier in the year, but as the year has progressed, much more of the state is now flood affected. Advise is for residents to submit their applications.

Other projects:

Flood alert system for Burringbar, Crabbes Creek and Mooball.

Mooball Creek Training Walls Rehabilitation.

Condong Creek Drainage Management Plan Implementation.

Murwillumbah Leagues Club Area Drainage Strategy - Grant funding approved for a new pump station, following recent adoption of the study by Council.

Property Flood Reports – (RQ – can we put a notification in the Tweed Links to advise the community these are available. MBS – yes. To be scheduled).

6 x Flood Monitoring Cameras – going through processes to make these public, aiming for early 2023.

Ongoing development Assessment.

Ongoing Maintenance of levees and floodgates.

RQ: Committee members have been in contact with Dr Jai Vaze (CSIRO) regarding flood modelling data for the Tweed.

DR advised that there is only funding for modelling at this stage for Richmond River.

DR: Northern Rivers Resilience Initiative – Review of plans of 7 Northern Rivers catchments (expect results before Christmas) and data collection of all 7 catchments using ground radar, advised they were only funded to do flood modelling of Richmond areas.

6. Government response to recommendations of Flood Inquiries - including Resilient Homes Fund (DR)

2 x documents provided with agenda:

NSW Government Flood Response to NSW Independent Flood Inquiry (O'Kane & Fuller).

NSW Government Response to the NSW Parliamentary Select Committee on the Response to the Major Flooding across NSW in 2022 (Upper House).

DR talked through the Independent Inquiry Recommendations. (Refer to attached slide)

Some significant work required, with reviews of flood planning levels and development of disaster adaptation plans required in 3 years for high-risk catchments (assuming Tweed).

Awaiting a government response on the details.

DR talked through the Upper House Recommendations.

A lot of cross over with the Independent Inquiry recommendations.

Various changes recommended in the inquiries are being considered/worked upon by the State Government and it is expected direction will be handed down from State Government and agencies to Council in the coming months/years.

JK: What opportunities does Council have to hand up to Government any information?

DR: There was a lot of talk of the North Coast councils to be involved in the implementation phase. As well, Council is willing to be involved in the initial work. Council has not made any formal responses to the inquiries.

RQ: Initial flood was devastating to the Cane industry, but the ongoing effects of La Nina affected the industry much more.

RQ: Buying back floodplains is not suitable for this area regarding cane producers.

SD: SES/Council - Communication with regional communities – notifications in his area are getting ones from QLD, but none from NSW. Hinterland villages need a similar scheme to Flood Alert System for Burringbar.

LM: Burringbar – Crabbes Creek etc is currently a pilot but is built with the intent for it to be rolled out further. This was set up with funding, and it us the 1st foray for Council to work in the warning space.

DR: Tweed Valley Flood Study update to include Chillingham, which will include a risk management assessment. Flood Warning Network needs to be set up through a process which usually takes about 3 years, with both Council and Government funding.

JF: Local monitoring network works well, but there are issues when communication coverage is affected.

TR: Request that Tweed Council request/organise rainfall gauges in Clothiers Creek catchment, and creek water height monitoring gauges on Clothiers Creek and Reserve Creek.

Motion 1:

Recommend that Council undertakes an amendment to the Coastal Creeks Floodplain Risk Management Plan to include consideration of flash flood warning system (including rain and stream gauges) in the Clothiers Creek and Reserves Creek areas to increase flood resilience in Cabarita / Bogangar.

Moved: Thomas Rehfeld

Seconded: Steven Smith

RECOMMENDED that Council undertakes an amendment to the Coastal Creeks Floodplain Risk Management Plan to include consideration of flash flood warning system (including rain and stream gauges) in the Clothiers Creek and Reserves Creek areas to increase flood resilience in Cabarita / Bogangar.

The motion was **Carried**.

Motion 2:

Recommend that Council includes consideration of flash flood warning system (including rain and stream gauges) for the hinterland villages including Tyalgum, Chillingham and Uki in the Floodplain Risk Management Study that will follow completion of the current expansion to the Tweed Valley Flood Study.

Moved: Jenna Ford

Seconded: Samuel Dawson

RECOMMENDED that Council includes consideration of flash flood warning system (including rain and stream gauges) for the hinterland villages including Tyalgum, Chillingham and Uki in the Floodplain Risk Management Study that will follow completion of the current expansion to the Tweed Valley Flood Study.

The motion was **Carried**.

7. BREAK

8. Discussion on Max Boyd submission (MB)

MB made a further submission on 23/11/2022 (red text version). Copy provided to committee. Main conclusions were the need to:

- Review planning controls below the PMF.
- Relocate residents or dwellings lost in the 2022 event.

LM discussed some of the locations deemed suitable flood free residential land from some desk top analysis he completed, that included considerations such as zoning, existing approvals, existing infrastructure (e.g., water, sewer etc.) This information was submitted by Council to the NRRC Resilient Lands Program.

DR talked through the key sites highlighted by MB in the Tweed Shire Urban & Employment Land Release Strategy (2009), and the current Housing and Growth Management Strategy that will update the strategy.

Resilient Homes Fund: Administered by the NRRC (Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation).

Resilient Land Program – Landowner expression of interest (2 hectares of more)

Resilient Homes Program – home buy backs, raising and retrofits.

Committee discussed to amend the wording in the submission from Max Boyd in point 12: Using the disaster adaption plans to urgently commence a program to migrate people to safer areas to live from high-risk floodplain areas on the Northern Rivers through a significantly expand land swap and voluntary house purchase scheme.

Motion:

Committee supports the use of disaster adaption plans to urgently commence a program to migrate people to safer areas to live from high-risk floodplain areas **in the Tweed** through a significantly expand land swap and voluntary house purchase scheme.

Moved: Jenna Ford

Seconded: Steven Smith

RESOLVED that the Committee supports the use of disaster adaptation plans to urgently commence a program to migrate people to safer areas to live from high-risk floodplain areas in the Tweed through a significantly expand land swap and voluntary house purchase scheme.

The motion was **Carried**

JK: Committee strongly supports the adaptation plan by Council, with the amendment of “on the Northern Rivers” to “**in the Tweed**”.

9. West Kingscliff Drainage Strategy (DR)

DR gave an overview and an update on the West Kingscliff Drainage Strategy. Previous investigations in this area incorporated the Tweed Valley Floodplain Risk Management Study & Plan, with 3 scenarios, along with the Acceptable Impact (urban =+35mm and rural =+100mm) DR also gave an overview of the Gales Master planning and the Council resolution from 7 July 2022 to enter Deed.

SS raised some concerns with the Gales 2009 study. DR explained that the new study is being conducted in conjunction with Gales.

10. Blacks Drain – Condong Creek basin drainage (RQ)

RQ: Provided an overview of issues facing rural landowners based on recent events, constrictions to flow, and impacts of new development.

DB: Condong Creek Drainage issues. Crown Lands (land swaps) delays. FG17L: 8 x flood gates (biggest in valley). Drain has been compromised, development including encroachments from business on the banks and now no longer able to be maintained.

DO: Businesses and residents impacting the drain and road reserves are under assessment with Council Compliance teams. Gave an update on the Blacks Drain funding and repairs.

DR: Until the current tenure issues are resolved, no funding or works progressed.

11. Bray Park Weir update (DR)

DR gave an update on saltwater intrusion at weir and what practises are currently in place, as well as some future options. The committee is encouraged to refer any community issues with potential flood impacts of the weir to the Water and Wastewater Unit.

12. General Business

TR: Request that Council organises a study of the flow rate and health of Cudgen Creek.

JF: Suggested that various environmental studies were conducted in associating with the SALT developments and that these may assist.

Report will be brought back to next Floodplain Management Committee meeting detailing historic data on the drawdown of Cudgen Lake, following flooded events, DPE advice on effectiveness of further studies and any previously reports on river health for Cudgen Creek and the lake.

DO: Recommended that representatives from the Northern River Reconstruction Corporation (NRRC), including Mike Rayner who is a member of the board, be invited to the next Floodplain Management Committee to brief the FMC on their programs.

Minutes

13. Next Meeting

Quarterly meetings to be held throughout 2023:

Feb

May

August

November

Dates to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 12.20 PM.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S COMMENTS:

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS: