

Flood Recovery Public Meeting 2

Location and Time

6pm, Starlight Lounge, Parkes Services Club, Short Street, Parkes NSW 2870.

Present

Mayor Ken Keith, Deputy Mayor Neil Westcot, Cr Bill Jayet and Cr Marg Applebee.

Mr Phil Donato, Member for Orange.

GM Kent Boyd

Directors Brendan Hayes, Andrew Francis, Ben Howard and Anthony McGrath.

State based organisations present:

Rural Adversity Mental Health Program (RAMHP), NSW Reconstruction Authority (NSW Reconstruction), Officer in Charge Parkes Police Local Command (Police), NSWSES Southern Zone (SES), Insurance Council of Australia (ICA).

Community Members

Approximately 75 community members were present in the room.

Welcome Country

6:01pm Mayor Ken Keith welcomed those present and acknowledged that the meeting was being held on Wiradjuri land. He introduced the key speakers, Mr Phil Donato, Councillors and Senior Staff present.

Presentations

The following presentation were given:

1. 6:03pm Rural Adversity Mental Health Program - Phil Worrad
2. 6:22pm NSW Reconstruction Authority - Dominic Lane
3. 6:32pm NSW State Emergency Services - Barry Griffiths - Deputy Zone Commander Southern Zone & Craig Ronan - Coordinator and Emergency Planning
4. 6:48pm Insurance Council of Australia - Liam Walter, Catastrophe Response
5. 7:05pm Parkes Shire Council Flood Study Update - Andrew Francis - Director Infrastructure.

7:24pm Presentations concluded.

Question and Answer (Q&A) Session

Details of the Q & A session are attached.

Meeting Close

Mayor thanked those who attended and for their respectful conduct.

The public meeting closed at 8:39pm.



Questions and Answers (Q&A)

Following is a summary of the questions asked at the flood recovery public meeting held on 16 August 2023 and the answers provided by the various agencies present.

Agencies who responded to the questions asked included the NSW Reconstruction Authority (NSW Reconstruction), NSWSES Southern Zone (SES), Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) and Parkes Shire Council (PSC).

Item	Question	Answer
1	How do we ensure that emergency services can reach the area in the future?	<p>(SES) was completely overwhelmed with calls given the rain event covered such a large area of the state. However, first step is to complete the flood study and review the recommended actions from that process and for emergency services and council to work together to improve facilities, (PSC) for example options may include reviewing the height of the Henry Parkes Way bridge.</p> <p>In the interim residents should consider their own plans and understand their threats, read weather maps and warnings and be proactive about keeping themselves safe.</p>
2	What can the Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) do to help where residents who are already overwhelmed with the consequences of a flood and now must complain to insurance companies who have rejected their claim?	(ICA) The ICA have engaged a consultant to review the processes following the events of last year. They are seeking feedback from stakeholders. In addition, there is a federal enquiry taking place to also review the events of last year and the coverage and response by insurance companies.
3	<p>Who looks after the creeks? There is a lot of fallen timber and natural debris that will cause blockages when the creek is in flood.</p> <p>Will that debris be cleaned out?</p>	(SES) The creek systems are managed by NSW Department Primary Industries & Environment. NSW EPA and fire brigade have been conducting a program to remove hazardous (man-made) materials but not natural debris. The flood study will help to identify what will need to be done to the creek system, particularly if there are blockages and obstructions.
4	<p>The flood study will take 72 weeks, how long before any new warning system will be ready? The Bureau of Meteorology was in other areas, why not Parkes?</p>	<p>(PSC) The first results from the Flood study will be understood after about 40 weeks.</p> <p>(SES) apologised for not including Parkes but will commit to contacting the Bureau and ask them to review the issues and potential for flash flood warning systems. The SES and Council will consult with the community and come back with options.</p>



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5	Owner was not aware that they were required to be out of their residence before any strip out and decontamination work commences. When an Insurance Company contracts someone to do work at a property, can they advise the owner what they need to do and what the process will be right at the start?	(ICA) The ICA will take that feedback onboard.
6	Will the flood study include the Bartley's Creek area - it was not shown on the presentation?	(PSC) The map presented at the meeting was a rudimentary map of the proposed area to be considered in the flood study. The flood study area will be determined by the consultants working with NSW Public Works, who are responsible for producing the study, but it will primarily focus on areas of residential inundation.
7	My insurance claim was rejected without reason. Would an independent hydrological report help?	(ICA) You can ask for the reason for the denial and for a copy of any information that was used to reject a claim. The Australian Financial Complaints Authority (AFCA) can consider a complaint you have about insurance, but you should lodge a complaint with the insurance company first.
8	What is the "list" and why didn't I get on the list for the financial assistance or water rates rebate? I asked Council about it several times but still we are not on the list!	(SES) The "list" is of the properties that were assessed by SES as being affected by the flood using their Rapid Impact Assessment tool. The process is meant to be a quick assessment and does not include photos or any detailed inspections. If the owner was not home, then the assessment is a 'desktop' assessment only. If there was no visible damage, then the property may have been missed. The list then informs the Reconstruction Authority about the extent of the flood damage and what will be needed for recovery. (PSC) Parkes Council did not own or maintain the list but did use it to distribute the Northparkes Mine funds and the water rate rebate. The list is also used to assess the Service NSW Back Home grants scheme. If your property was inundated but did not get on the list for an impact assessment, please contact Service NSW on 13 77 88 .
9	Transport have said that the proposed railway bridge work at	(PSC) We will take advice from NSW Public Works and the consultants engaged to complete the



Item	Question	Answer
	Tichborne will not be affected by flooding. But Crooked Creek floods regularly at the Mad Mile area. Will Crooked Creek be included in the Flood Study?	Flood Study but will aim primarily at residential inundation impact. Crooked Creek may be included but not in the same detail as the other catchments. We will seek to review our study with the work done by Transport.
10	The Flood Study survey is only interested in the flooding event and not about how we were affected by the flood and the recovery issues we had, such as not being on the "List" and not qualifying for the Water rebate or the Northparkes Mine grant. How can we tell our story about the event and how we were affected?	(PSC) We will look at how we can capture those stories from residents, perhaps using an online tool or maybe providing a way for residents to come into Council have tell us about their experience. We will discuss and advise as soon as we can.
11	I've heard about the government's Hazard Insurance Partnership, where subsidies are available for those with increased premiums. Can you tell us more about that?	(ICA) The hazards insurance partnership or HIP, was announced in the last federal budget alongside the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF). The HIP is a partnership between industry and government to start looking at how hazards can be mapped with an outcome of helping communities with insurance affordability. There are no subsidies available currently.
12	Will the Council be looking into a buyback system or even funding to allow residents to raise their house if it is in a flood zone?	(PSC) Yes, Council will lobby for either scheme, if that is one of the outcomes of the Flood Study. We must work through the State Government system, so that we can implement their recommendations around what must be done. It is highly unlikely that the Government would provide support for any solutions without the flood study being fully completed and recommendations provided. Council will fight for the funding to support the outcomes from the Flood Study.
13	How can I do any work on my house if it will be included in a buyback scheme?	(PSC) There won't be an early answer to this question because it is highly unlikely that the State will provide any such schemes until the full Flood Study process has been completed.
14	The Lake Endeavour Early Warning web site doesn't work!	(PSC) There is no power at Lake Endeavour, so the system runs entirely off battery and solar power. The warning system is designed to notify when the dam is in threat of failure, and since the dam has been upgraded that is now at high water levels. The different trigger levels and warning options will be reviewed with the work we are



Item	Question	Answer
		<p>doing with SES and Public Works. The current process is that the alert is sent to Council's operators who will then call SES. The Lake Endeavour catchment is however only about 1/5th of the catchment, so a very large flood at the Lake does not necessarily mean a large flood in Parkes, i.e., the size of a flood at Lake Endeavour is not a predictor of the flood size at Parkes.</p>
15	<p>We are not currently living in our house, how do know if our house was assessed for hazards and is on the list?</p>	<p>(SES & NSW Reconstruction) See Answer 8.</p>
16	<p>Some houses are more than a KM away from the front gate, how can you do a desktop assessment from the front gate?</p>	<p>(NSW Reconstruction) Yes, some houses are not assessed but the objective is to understand the overall impact. If you want to know about whether an assessment has been conducted at your residence contact NSW Reconstruction. See also Answer 8.</p>
17	<p>On the night of the flood the Lake Endeavour warning system web site was working. The issue was that the speed of the water moving through the catchment was much faster than normal. I don't think there is anything wrong with the system, it just needs tweaking.</p>	<p>(PSC) The system does give an indication, but Lake Endeavour is only about 1/5th of the overall catchment, we can't predict a flood based solely on the amount of water going over the dam wall. The Flood Study Survey is the best way for everyone to get their stories about the water and flooding to Public Works to inform the flood study, so please fill out the survey.</p>
18	<p>Anglicare is offering grants to assist flood affected residents with their wellbeing and recovery. An event by Quota, CWA, Rotary and the Action Club will be held at the Racecourse for the community on 28 October. Opportunity to talk and eat and have a cuppa. Council and other services will be invited.</p>	<p>For information. See Anglicare for more details.</p>
19	<p>A call was made to emergency services from a property at Hunt's Crossing before midnight, and another to SES at 3:30am. What was the response by SES after the first call?</p>	<p>(SES) The calls for assistance are logged in a database and triaged by staff. There were around 8000 events across the Lachlan region. We know that there were people isolated and stuck for a long period of time and they were the priority. However, there was not many resources on the ground on that night. They worked through the</p>



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		<p>night and most of the next day. Grateful for the fact that there was no loss of life on that night, considering that SES had only a handful of people available with one vehicle and boat.</p> <p>Additional PSC Note: Because there has not been a flood of this size in living memory (or any official records of a flood previously) or a flood study completed, the height at Hunts Crossing would have been by enlarge meaningless to an SES call centre (ie not being in any Flood Plan and not having a specific level indicator to reference), particularly amongst 100's of calls for human rescue. The level at Hunts Crossing represents only ~1/3rd (approximately) of the Parkes catchment, and accordingly is not a predictor of residential inundation at Parkes, obviously it would give some warning of a flood, but not the size of the flood (ie without knowing what the northern catchment is doing). While we need to conduct the flood study to fully understand the November 2022 event, it is likely that the Peak-Flood from the northern catchment (Goobang, Back Creek & Coobang Creek), met the Peak-Flood from the eastern catchment (Billabong, Bindogandri & Beargamil...which includes Lake Endeavour and Hunts Crossing) at the confluence of these streams (near Kamandra Lane). We suspect that it was the unusual coincidence of the two very large flood peaks that caused the inundation of southern Parkes, and the flood study will be used to see if this was in fact the case.</p>
20	When will we see the SES post event report?	<p>(SES) The event at Parkes was part of the Lachlan event that covered the southern part of the state that saw over 8,000 calls for assistance received. There have been several after-action reviews.</p> <p>Specially, there are simply not enough volunteers to handle an event as large as this. The SES are looking for more volunteers.</p> <p>The review is done at State level, and we don't know when/if it will be available.</p>
21	Will the alert system we currently have be changed, or the alert trigger levels are lowered? Will there be an alert	<p>(PSC) NSW Public Works are our Dam engineers and are also managing the flood study. They will look at both together and if their advice is to change the alert levels at the Dam and methods of</p>



Item	Question	Answer
	SMS put in place like there is at Forbes?	communication, then absolutely that's what we will do.

Separately attached presentation by;

1. **Philip Worrad**, Rural Adversity Mental Health Program Coordinator, Western NSW Local Health District.
2. **Dominic Lane**, Executive Director, NSW Reconstruction Authority.
3. **Barry Griffiths**, Deputy Zone Commander and **Craig Ronan** ESM Coordinator Emergency Planning, NSW State Emergency Service.
4. **Liam Walter**, Senior Manager, Mitigations and Catastrophe Management, Insurance Council of Australia.
5. **Andrew Francis**, Director of Infrastructure, Parkes Shire Council.