

FLOODPLAIN RISK MANAGEMENT ACROSS THE MOREE PLAINS

While a flood in the Moree Plains may currently seem like a distant memory, the prolonged drought has highlighted the need for long-term policy commitments and action today to future-proof our communities. The same can be said for flood events.

Since May 2018, the Moree Plains Shire Floodplain Risk Management Committee (**Committee**) has been in place, with the Committee comprising representatives across the Shire. The Committee was formed to assist Moree Plains Shire Council (**Council**) in the development and implementation of floodplain risk management plans across the Shire.

Since its formation, the Committee has been meeting regularly. Floodplain Risk Management Plans take time to investigate, fund and implement which is why the value of the Committee cannot be underestimated.

While the Committee represents the whole of the Shire, at the present time, the Committee focuses on floodplain initiatives for Mungindi, Pallamallawa and Moree as these locations require further investigation into their floodplain mitigation options. Details in relation to the current status of efforts for each of these communities is set out below:

Mungindi

Council has received funding from the NSW Government, specifically the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (**DPIE**) in relation to floodplain activities in Mungindi. A consultant has been engaged to undertake design and investigation works for the levee in Mungindi. This investigation will proceed and outcomes of community consultation will be an important part of those investigations.

The existing levee does not provide adequate protection for the residents of Mungindi. The investigation will identify the current deficiencies and the design will determine the appropriate methodology for increasing the height of the levee.

Pallamallawa

Following a bus tour in 2018, the priorities for Pallamallawa were identified. A design review of the northern levee prepared by consultants has been endorsed and Council will submit an application for funding in relation to the Pallamallawa northern levee in early 2020.

The review of the southern levee at Pallamallawa will be workshopped with the community in early 2020.

Moree

Council received a grant during the 2013/2014 financial year for a project to review the Moree and Environs Floodplain Risk Management Plan (**FRMP**) with a 2D (two dimensional) model to investigate management options and enhance land use planning evaluation of FRMP strategies.

Since this time, a number of investigations have been undertaken in relation to options for floodplain mitigation in Moree. Details of these are set out at the end of this Media Release.

In May 2019, Council endorsed the Moree and Environs Floodplain Risk Management Plan. A copy of this Plan can be found on Council's website. Importantly, the Plan summarises the management measures (Structural Planning and Emergency Response) that have been recommended for further investigation for Moree. These are detailed in the Plan at page 20 Table 3.1 Recommended Floodplain Risk Management Measures for Moree, as extracted below.

Table 3.1 - Recommended floodplain risk management measures for Moree

Priority	Measure	Recommendation	Indicative Cost and Benefit	Responsibility
High	1. Establish a community reference group	The reference group would initially discuss the pros and cons of a potential levee scheme and decide whether a feasibility study should be undertaken. The community reference group should be made up of representatives of the commercial businesses within Moree as well as residents both within the urban areas of Moree and the rural areas of Stonnington, Yarraman and Gwydirfield. The reference group would also consider changes to the flood planning measures.	Improved communication with the community and decision making.	Moree Plains Shire Council
High	2. Investigate the feasibility of the Moree town Levee	The study should investigate the preferred alignment of a proposed levee and undertake detailed design of the levee and road/rail crossings. Strategies to mitigate the impacts to the residents outside the levee should be developed in consultation with the affected residents.	Feasibility study cost up to \$300,000 (engineering design and consultation). Initial benefit cost ratio of the proposed levee estimated to be 1.2 to 2.6.	Moree Plains Shire Council
Medium	3. Voluntary house raising scheme	Pending the results of the levee feasibility study and community consultation, the existing house raising and voluntary purchase scheme should continue using the updated priority list. The community reference group should be consulted on how to improve the uptake of the scheme and any proposals brought to the NSW Government on the funding arrangements.	Funding capped at \$120,000 (excl. GST) per property. Benefits of reduced flood damages.	Moree Plains Shire Council
Medium	4. Stormwater pipe one-way flap valve floodgates.	Pending the results of the levee feasibility study and community consultation, one-way flap valves to be installed on the downstream end of the stormwater pipes identified in the floodplain management study (Volume II).	Approx. \$10K per valve (depending upon size). Increased flood evacuation times for residents in affected cul-de-sac areas.	Moree Plains Shire Council
Medium	5. Dr Geoffrey Hunter Bridge approach raise	Pending the results of the levee feasibility study and community consultation, undertake detailed design of raising the northern approach to Dr Geoffrey Hunter Bridge.	Design and construct estimated at \$200,000. Increased flood evacuation times for residents	Moree Plains Shire Council
Low	6. Hassall Street causeway raise	Pending the results of the levee feasibility study and community consultation, undertake detailed design of raising the Hassall Street causeway across the Gwydir Highway.	Design and construct estimated at \$50,000. Increased flood evacuation times for residents	Moree Plains Shire Council
High	7. Yarraman Helipad	Undertake detailed design of constructing the helipad and undertake community consultation. Incorporate the helipad operations into the Local Flood Plan.	Design and construct estimated at \$25,000. Primary evacuation location for Yarraman residents	Moree Plains Shire Council
Low	8. Boonery Road causeway raise	Pending the results of the levee feasibility study and community consultation, undertake detailed design of raising the Boonery Road causeway across the Greenbah floodway.	Design and construct estimated at \$180,000. Increased flood evacuation times for residents	Moree Plains Shire Council
High	9. Limited height of rural levees	Prepare a formal letter to the NSW Minister responsible for floodplain planning and licencing of rural levees requesting a response to the findings that the rural levees are impact on flooding in Moree.	Negligible cost to council. Potentially significant reduction in flood damage costs for Moree and environs	Moree Plains Shire Council
High	10. Flood Planning level	Pending updated modelling, incorporate the flood planning area map into the Moree Plains Shire Council Development Control Plan	Cost to development. Assists in the management of future development to minimise the flood-related risk and damages.	Moree Plains Shire Council
Medium	11. Land use planning	Consider negotiation with individual lot holders for vacant land zoned R2 and R5 in the high hazard floodway to change the land use zones to rural.	Cost to development. Assists in the management of future development to minimise the flood-related risk and damages.	Moree Plains Shire Council
High	12. Building and development controls	Pending updated modelling, consider updating development controls for flood prone land and update the Development control plan and Local Environment plan to incorporate the updated policies.	Cost of updating plan estimated at \$15,000. Assists in the management of future development to minimise the flood-related risk and damages.	Moree Plains Shire Council
High	13. Section 149 certificates	Review and update Section 149 Certificates to include flood related information and undertake a community education programme to inform property holders of their flood risk.	Cost of preparing database and certificates estimated at \$20,000. Informs residents about flood-related development controls and assists in ensuring future development is flood compatible.	Moree Plains Shire Council
High	14. Local flood plan	Review and update the Local Flood Plan to incorporate information on flood risks to properties and additional information on road inundation and flood warning. Communicate the contents of the Local flood plan to the community.	Cost of updating plan estimated at \$5,000. Improves the management of the continuing flood risk in Moree.	SES
High	15. Flood education plan	Develop and implement an ongoing flood education plan.	Estimated at \$15,000 per year. Improves the management of the continuing flood risk in Moree.	Moree Plains Shire Council

In October 2019, Council was successful in securing \$137,000 from DPIE for a feasibility study of the flood risk management plan recommended options contained in this Plan. This study will allow the community, through Council and the Committee, to work through the recommendations.

Mayor Katrina Humphries said she was delighted that funding of this nature had been received, stating “Council will use these funds awarded through the State Government’s Floodplain Management Grants Program to support the cost of a feasibility study to investigate implementing water management options included in its latest floodplain management plan adopted earlier this year.”

Mayor Humphries, who also chairs the Committee, noted that the Plan aims to benefit all community members and that Council will act based on the best technical information available.

“Moree is no stranger to floods; in 2011 and 2012 we experienced floods that displaced residents from all areas of Moree Plains Shire. The vicious cycle of droughts and flooding rains is a reality for our community and Council will strive to ensure our homes and businesses are prepared for this.

Council’s General Manager, Mr Lester Rodgers explained under the NSW Floodplain Development Manual 2005 Council is legally required to update its flood management and mitigation plan.

“We are currently in stage two of the process; this includes finalising the current plan and conducting a feasibility study to further investigate implementing a range of water management options included in its latest flood management plan.”

Once the feasibility study is completed Council will work together with Northern Tablelands MP Adam Marshall to secure future funding to support any physical flood mitigation works which may include raising the northern approach to Dr Geoffrey Hunter Bridge on Balo Street, developing a helipad at Yarraman and partnering in the continuance.

For more details in relation to Floodplain Risk Management in the Moree Plains, see Council’s website > Hot Topics> Floodplain Risk Management.

ENDS

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Authorised by: Chair, Floodplain Management Committee

Background to Moree Floodplain Risk Management Plan

Council received a grant during the 2013/2014 financial year for a project to review the Moree and Environs Floodplain Risk Management Plan (FRMP) with a 2D (two dimensional) model to investigate management options and enhance land use planning evaluation of FRMP strategies.

Since this time, a number of investigations have been undertaken in relation to options for floodplain mitigation in Moree, including:

March 2017	Flood Study/Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan Volume I was completed and adopted.
August 2017	Flood Study/Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan Volume II was completed and adopted.
September 2017	Community Meeting to consider the recommendations made in Volume II. At that time, no policy changes had been made by Council in response to Volume II.
May 2019	Flood Study/Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan Volume III was completed and adopted. The adoption of Volume III has taken some time with the formation of the new Committee and the need to closely consider the recommendations contained in Volume II. The adoption of Volume III brings to conclusion the final work on the review of the FRMP. This document now becomes the new Moree and Environs Floodplain Risk Management Plan. The adoption of Volume III by Council will allow the Committee to commence working through the recommendations as adopted, which includes all but one of the recommendations contained in the draft Volume III report and the addition of nine recommendations from the peer review report of all three Volumes by GCA Engineering Solutions undertaken last December 2018.
October 2019	Council was successful in securing \$137,000 from DPIE for a feasibility study of the flood risk management plan recommended options contained in Volume III. This study will allow the community, through Council and the Committee, to work through the recommendations.