

Amended Item



Item No: 5.9
Title: Central Coast Council Flood Recovery Report
Department: Environment and Planning

27 April 2021 Ordinary Council Meeting

Reference: F2019/01412 - D14596920
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Report purpose

To provide an update to Council on the recovery statistics and efforts, following the recent severe weather event and floods on the Central Coast.

Executive Summary

A significant severe weather event impacting the Central Coast and more broadly NSW resulted in minor flooding in Tuggerah Lakes with levels peaking at 1.52m on Monday 22 March 2021 and a major flood in the Hawkesbury River associated with high rainfalls in the catchment area to the west and south-west of the Sydney Basin. Communities along the Hawkesbury River including Wisemans Ferry, Gunderman and Spencer experienced major flood levels peaking at 4.3m at Wisemans Ferry on Wednesday 24 March 2021.

As part of the recovery efforts from this weather event, Central Coast Council has:

- collected more than 306 tonnes of wrack and flood debris around Tuggerah Lakes, including from the road reserve in front 180 residential properties and from over 4km of foreshore
- collected 710 tonnes of debris from beaches associated with flooding from Hawkesbury River: Terrigal 615 tonnes (seaweed), and the remainder from Patonga, Umina, Ettalong, Killcare, Avoca and Shelly Beach
- repaired more than 3,000 potholes across our road networks
- completed 4,400 bulk kerbside collections across the Coast post the storm event
- Established over 120 road closures due to flooding over the road

Central Coast Council stood up its Incident Management Team (IMT) for this event which included representatives across the organisation to ensure a coordinated approach was carried out across the coast in the response effort.

In association with this weather event, Council staff have published 42 posts across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram which have reached more than 1,059,536 people with 13,442 likes, comments and shares and 1052,365 post clicks.

Staff have noted generally positive feedback from our community in response to Council's communication and recovery efforts.

Environment and Planning Recommendation

That Council acknowledge the efforts of our community, Central Coast Council staff and external emergency response agencies thanking them for their response and recovery efforts in the clean-up, following the recent flood events on the Central Coast.

Background

Central Coast experienced a severe weather event from Thursday 18 March 2021. This severe weather event resulting in the declaration of a Natural Disaster by the NSW Government across 63 Local Government areas including the Central Coast.

Around 450mm fell over the six days from Friday 19 March to Wednesday 24 March, with the heaviest falls on Saturday to Monday. This rainfall produced flooding in Tuggerah Lakes with levels peaking at 1.52m on Monday 22 March. This was about a 15% Annual Exceedance Probability (1 in 7-year recurrence interval) flood.

A major flood occurred in the Hawkesbury River associated with high rainfalls in the catchment area to the west and south-west of the Sydney Basin. This affected the river communities on the north bank of the Hawkesbury River including Wisemans Ferry, Gunderman and Spencer. River levels peaked on Wednesday 24 March 2021, with the following recorded flood gauge levels:

- 4.3m at Wisemans Ferry
- 2.5m at Gunderman and
- 1.4m at Spencer

Normal river levels at these locations generally remain below 1m. Many of these river communities were isolated, with much property damage, including significant clean-up costs associated with debris from the upper Hawkesbury.

SES are the lead emergency response agency responsible for response and recovery efforts to storm and flood events. Central Coast SES has received have received 1130 requests for assistance across the Central Coast community since the beginning of the severe weather event.

Current Status

Central Coast Council is continuing to assist the community to recover from this severe weather that impacted our region in March 2021.

Over the past month, Central Coast Council has:

5.9 Central Coast Council Flood Recovery Report (contd)

- collected more than 306 tonnes of wrack, including from the road reserve in front 180 residential properties around Tuggerah Lakes, and flood debris from over 4km of foreshore
- collected 710 tonnes of debris from beaches: Terrigal 615 tonnes (seaweed), and the remainder from Patonga, Umina, Ettalong, Killcare, Avoca and Shelly Beach
- repaired more than 3,000 potholes across our road networks
- made safe 22 landslip sites within road reserves
- identified 15 sites of significant road damage with four repaired, nine made safe with interim works, two scheduled for repair and three remaining closed due to severity
- completed 4,400 bulk kerbside collections across the Coast in the two weeks post the storm event
- commenced composting 882 tonnes of seagrass and seaweed which will be processed into soil products
- Established over 120 road closures due to flooding over the road

The Central Coast community has delivered:

- 127 tonnes of storm related waste to Council's waste management facilities with over 70% of this material diverted from landfill
- 1.38 tonnes of seagrass wrack to Councils waste facilities free of charge.

In association with this weather event, Council staff have published 42 posts across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram which have reached more than 1,059,536 people with 13,442 likes, comments and shares and 1052,365 post clicks. This has included a number of posts prior to the onset of the event to forewarn the community of projected impacts.

With the declaration of a natural disaster for the Central Coast, support services are available for impacted residents to aid recovery. ResilienceNSW is the lead disaster management agency for NSW, responsible for all aspects of disaster recovery. ResilienceNSW initially established Disaster Welfare Assistance Point at Diggers The Entrance for residents around Tuggerah Lakes. Currently, Resilience NSW has a Recovery Centre operational at Wisemans Ferry to support impacted Hawkesbury River communities, including Central Coast communities of Gunderman and Spencer.

Financial Considerations

There are no financial impacts associated with the recommendations of this report. The cost to Council however from the recovery efforts to date is \$739,907, with identified further encumbrances of \$434,022. It is expected that there will be further costs associated with the recovery efforts in addition to this, meaning total costs are likely to exceed \$1,173,929. The costs associated with the event currently remain unbudgeted.

Advice from Resilience NSW, confirms that a proportion of costs associated with recovery from this event will be able to be reimbursed. The value of these reimbursements has not yet been determined.

Link to Community Strategic Plan

Theme 5: Liveable

Goal A: Our community spirit is our strength

B-A3: Work together to solve a range of social and health issues that may impact community wellbeing and vulnerable people.

Attachments

Nil.