

## **Minutes of the Floodplain Management Committee Meeting held Friday 16 February 2018**

### **Venue:**

Canvas and Kettle Meeting Room, Murwillumbah Civic Centre.

### **Time:**

9.00am

### **Present:**

Cr Chris Cherry, Danny Rose, Leon McLean, Stuart Russell, Doreen Harwood (Tweed Shire Council), Martin Rose, Caroline Ortel (Office of Environment and Heritage), Wayne Pettit, Peter Mair (New South Wales State Emergency Service), Felicia Cecil, Robert Quirk, Max Boyd, Samuel Dawson, Dion Andrews, Mike Allen, Steven Smith.

Guest for Agenda Item 3: David Tetley (Catchment Simulation Solutions).

### **Apologies:**

Cr James Owen, David Oxenham.

### **Minutes of Previous Meeting:**

**Moved: M Boyd**

**Seconded: R Quirk**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Floodplain Management Committee meeting held Friday 1 September 2017 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings of that meeting.

### **Business Arising:**

#### **Item 4 (1/9/17) – Request for Floodplain Committee Membership – Tumbulgum Community Association**

Following Council endorsement of the Committee's recommendation to accept the nomination from the Tumbulgum Community Association, the Committee welcomed Steve Smith to the meeting.

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### **Agenda Items:**

#### **1. Discussions with ABC North Coast regarding Flood Coverage**

At the time of producing the agenda, a meeting was scheduled between Council staff, SES officers, and management from ABC North Coast for 8 February 2018. Unfortunately this meeting was subsequently postponed by the ABC and will now be held at the SES Headquarters at Goonellabah on 8 March. Max Boyd requested that Committee members be able to attend the meeting.

Discussion items raised by the Committee members for this meeting included the need for locally based communications, as had been available in years gone by with radio 2MW, the need for more regular updates of flood warnings at specified times, and consideration of ABC Gold Coast for Lower Tweed communities.

## **COMMITTEE ACTIONS:**

**That:**

- 1. Any Committee member wishing to attend the meeting with ABC North Coast and SES on 8 March email Linda Cooper as soon as possible so that this can be confirmed with the meeting organisers.**
- 2. Committee members wanting to table issues for discussion at the meeting email these to Linda Cooper as soon as possible for submission to the meeting organisers for inclusion on the agenda.**

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## **2. Report on Recommendations from Independent Review of SES Operations, North Coast Floods 2017**

At the last meeting a report into the Independent Review (the Owens Report) was requested by the Committee and Council, with responses to the recommendations as they apply to Tweed Shire.

Danny Rose tabled the draft report. Of the 36 Owens recommendations, 14 were considered relevant to Council. The draft report supported all but one of these recommendations (being No.36). The meeting then discussed a number of the recommendations in detail.

Recommendation 2 relates to finding permanent alternate accommodation for Murwillumbah SES. The Committee was advised that several alternate sites had been reviewed, but had to date been unsuccessful, and Council was in discussions with the State Government for funding assistance. The negotiations to date are commercial in confidence.

Max Boyd requested that Council approach the Murwillumbah Showground Trust, as they have high land adjacent to Banner Street and had recently supported a range of other organisations looking for sites. Doreen Harwood advised that this site had been discussed with the Trust previously but had not progressed.

**Moved: Max Boyd**

**Seconded: Robert Quirk**

### **AMENDMENT 1:**

That Council formally approaches the Murwillumbah Showground Trust requesting use of their land off Banner Street as an alternate site for SES Accommodation in Murwillumbah, and enlist the support of the Local Member Thomas George MP.

**FOR VOTE: Unanimous**

Mike Allen tabled a list of recommendations from the Lismore Citizens Group, and a letter from the SES Commissioner, presumably in response to their submission (copy attached to minutes). Mike considered these recommendations to be reflective of the Tweed Community following the March 2017 flood, and moved that they be incorporated into Council's submission.

**Moved: Mike Allen**

**Seconded: Felicia Cecil**

**AMENDMENT 2:**

That the recommended Council responses to items 12, 14 and 31 of the Owens Report be amended to incorporate the "Recommendations to the Bureau of Meteorology from Lismore Citizens Group 31/1/2018".

***FOR VOTE: Unanimous***

Recommendation 36 relates to the SES's role in land use planning.

Danny Rose explained the position in the draft report, that the SES as currently constituted and resourced is unable to perform the proposed function as a mandatory referral agency. The SES currently provides input into strategic plans and policies through this Committee and other opportunities to "influence and advise". Danny concluded that until such time as the SES's role was legislated under the relevant Acts, the scope of their role in land use planning clearly defined, and the SES organisation resourced by suitably qualified staff to undertake detailed town planning and engineering assessments, as well as regulating any controls they impose, Recommendation 36 should not be supported.

SES officers in attendance agreed and said they were not in a position to perform this role, and that this was not consistent with their organisation direction at this time, despite the formal SES response to the Owen's Report being in the affirmative for Recommendation 36.

Max Boyd moved an amendment requesting local SES input into the planning system, through adoption of a local policy. Max spoke passionately about the important role that local SES plays in protecting lives and property from flooding, and risking their own lives when doing so. He considered it essential that these people therefore have a say in future development.

Danny Rose spoke against the amendment, highlighting that the number of applications covered by such a policy would likely amount to over 1000 per year and that the SES could not perform this role. While there are many high flood risk areas in Tweed Shire, these are a product of legacy planning issues and decisions, and cannot be repeated due to much more comprehensive planning controls that have been developed in part through this Committee and with SES input. These points were agreed by SES representatives.

**Moved: Max Boyd**

**Seconded: Robert Quirk**

**AMENDMENT 3:**

That Tweed Shire Council adopts a policy that requires its planners to confer and consult with the Local Tweed Shire SES Controllers in all cases involving residential development of all types that are proposed to be built on land below the Probable Maximum Flood.

**FOR VOTE: 6**

**AGAINST VOTE: 2**

**Moved: Robert Quirk**

**Seconded: Dion Andrews**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the amended Council report be forwarded to Council.**

**FOR VOTE: Unanimous**

A copy of the revised Council report, with Committee additions highlighted in **yellow** is attached to these minutes.

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### **3. Murwillumbah CBD Flood Study Update**

Consultant David Tetley from Catchment Simulation Solutions presented the final stage of the Murwillumbah CBD Flood Study, specifically the results of options testing to reduce flood risk. Many of the proposed options were expensive, or did not result in significant improvements, so did not attract Benefit Cost Ratios (BCRs) that were likely to be supported by grant programs.

One option that the Committee asked for further clarification was the perceived benefits of modifying the floodgates in the Commercial Road levee to aid in draining the town should an overtopping event occur. Committee members also suggested that Council officers contact John Henley for input given his involvement in the existing levee.

A copy of David's presentation is attached to the minutes.

**Moved: Robert Quirk**

**Seconded: Max Boyd**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the draft Murwillumbah CBD Flood Study Report and attachments be publicly exhibited.**

**VOTE FOR: Unanimous**

## **4. OEH Flood Grant Projects 2017/18**

Leon McLean summarised the successful grant projects under the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage Floodplain Management Program 2017/18, being:

1. South Murwillumbah Flood Study (\$150,000)
2. Rain and stream gauges, Burringbar, Mooball, Crabbes Creek (\$77,333)
3. Incorporate Tumbulgum Gauge into BoM warnings (\$46,000)

Council also submitted four applications for new schemes for Voluntary House Purchase (VHP) and Voluntary House Raising (VHR) in South Murwillumbah, Bray Park, Burringbar, Mooball and Crabbes Creek. These areas were identified by the Tweed Valley and Coastal Creeks Floodplain Risk Management Studies. Council was advised last December that these schemes are eligible to access the funding pool for VHP/VHR, subject to developing 3 year work programs for OEH approval. There is a great deal of work involved in prioritising and consulting the many properties at risk in these areas, so will take some time to roll out.

Council recently considered a report into these grant schemes and endorsed their progress.

Given the current workload to deliver the above grants, 2018/19 applications to OEH would likely be limited to erecting flood signage and markers for the March 2017 flood, as per the previous recommendation of the Committee.

Steve Smith asked whether homes at Tumbulgum would be eligible under the schemes. As they were not identified in the preferred schemes in the Risk Management Studies, they are not included as priorities at this stage.

Sam Dawson asked when Council is likely to pursue flood modelling for the hinterland villages, as there are many at-risk properties there. A review of the Tweed Valley Flood Study is due in 2019/2020, being 10 years since the last update. This would be a good opportunity to expand the coverage of the flood model, and recalibrate against the recent record flood.

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## **5. South Murwillumbah Land Swap Proposal**

Danny Rose gave the Committee a brief explanation of a land swap proposal that Council has been working on since the March 2017 flood, to relocate large high value businesses from the worst effected parts of the South Murwillumbah industrial estate to the flood free Industry Central.

Such a project requires government support, which is currently being negotiated. We are hopeful of an announcement soon.

The Committee voiced strong support for this initiative.

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## 6. Meeting Schedule 2018

It is proposed to continue to meet quarterly in February, May, August and November 2018. Given no objections were raised by Committee members, Linda Cooper will circulate dates for these future meetings soon.

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### General Business:

## 7. Flood Commemoration

Danny Rose explained that due to the ongoing sensitivity of large parts of the community following the March 2017 flood, there will only be low key events planned. Council will arrange to run an edited version of the Flood Liftout publication that was published just prior to Christmas, but did not appear to attract much attention.

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## 8. Sea Level Rise

Robert Quirk asked for some confirmation of sea level rise assumptions in Council's work. Danny Rose confirmed that a 0.91m sea level rise prediction for 2100 was included in flood studies to date. This was government advice circa 2007, but has since been withdrawn. Martin Rose said that some other Councils have adopted an interim sea level rise of 0.55m for a mid-range (2050) estimate.

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## 9. Flood Insurance

Dion Andrews asked about Flood Insurance and whether Council could promote information through the Tweed Link or public workshops on the matter of under-insurance for flooding. It has been the experience of his family and many others' that the cost of rebuilding is far in excess of real estate prices with Council fees and other overheads not normally considered.

### COMMITTEE ACTION:

**Council officers will investigate whether the Insurance Council of Australia has information available on under-insurance.**

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## 10. Preserving Flood Data

Max Boyd asked whether damage information has been collated on the March 2017 flood, as the Historical Society is interested in archiving this information. Doreen Harwood and Caroline Ortel confirmed that NSW Fire and Rescue undertook Rapid Damage Assessments of all flood impacted areas and held this in various forms. Council and OEHL has to date only gained access to some of this data, and much of it is likely to be

confidential as it relates to private addresses. Robert Quirk suggested that there may be data available on agricultural losses.

## **COMMITTEE ACTIONS:**

**That:**

- 1. Doreen Harwood contacts NSW Fire and Rescue to ascertain the availability of residential /commercial/industrial flood damage data for the March 2017 event and whether or not this can be made available publicly.**
  - 2. Robert Quirk contacts Department of Primary Industries to ascertain the availability of agricultural flood damage data for the March 2017 event and whether or not this can be made available publicly.**
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## **11. Flood Records**

Prior to the meeting, Felicia Cecil requested a summary of flood records for Chinderah, ranked in intensity with estimates of recurrence interval:

Historical Chinderah Flood Levels

BOM Barney's Point Flood Level Classifications: Minor: 1.30, Moderate: 1.70, Major: 2.00

<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Level (m AHD)</b>	<b>Approx' ARI (years)</b>
1	1954	2.9	100
2	2017	2.3	30
3	1974	2.2	>20
4	1989	2	<20
5	2013	1.9	<20
6	2016	1.8	15
7	2012	1.6	10

The Committee considered that this kind of data was very useful, and requested that a consolidated list of flood records be provided at key locations. Martin Rose suggested that there was a similar table already in our flood studies.

## **COMMITTEE ACTION:**

**That Council officers seek to produce in table form historic flood data at key locations for circulation to the Committee.**

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## 12. Shelter in Place

Max Boyd asked what Council's and the SES's position is on shelter in place (SIP) for new development.

Danny Rose explained that through the risk management process, it had been determined that in certain locations and circumstances SIP was a reasonable approach to managing flood risk. He gave an example in Tweed Heads east of Wharf Street where multi-storey residential buildings provided SIP for short durations where flood depths and velocities were relatively benign. He also gave the example of mixed use development that at one stage was proposed in Prospero Street, South Murwillumbah which was strongly opposed for SIP due to the high hazard flood behaviour and risk to life for those tasked with resupply or rescue. SIP provides a back-up plan for those who cannot or choose not to evacuate, which remains the preferred emergency response approach.

Wayne Pettit stated that generally the SES had opposed shelter in place, including in submissions in the past to Tweed Shire Council. SES would not support new development on the basis of SIP, but may in some circumstances consider it for existing development to reduce flood risk, especially if there is a lack of warning time.

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## 13. Banora Point SES Accommodation

Felicia Cecil asked whether alternate accommodation had been sought for Banora SES, given its tenure at Pioneer Parade. Danny Rose confirmed that this was also being considered, but that a suitable site had not yet been found.

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### **Next Meeting:**

The next meeting of the Floodplain Management Committee will be held in May 2018. Date to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 12:15.