



KYOGLLE COUNCIL

M E D I A R E L E A S E

Date: 3 April 2017

Kyogle Council staff are back in the field repairing and inspecting flood damage across the Kyogle Council area, with the damages bill expected to be between \$3 million and \$5 million.

Council's priority is to restore access to residents as soon as possible.

Staff have been working since Thursday night to keep main roads open and were out in the field throughout the weekend inspecting roads, documenting damaged infrastructure, developing a prioritised program of works and restoring access where possible.

Several roads were reopened Saturday and Sunday after flood water subsided and staff were able to clear debris from bridges, carry out culvert repairs, and repair bridge approaches.

This work will continue throughout the week.

At this stage, staff have identified a number of bridges with structural damage and a number of roads remain closed where the damage requires further assessment or alternative routes are available to residents and emergency vehicles. The number of areas affected in this way is likely to increase as further inspections take place.

On Saturday afternoon there were more than 200 people isolated by landslips and damaged roads and bridges across nine different roads. By Monday morning access has been restored to all but three of these roads.

A temporary bridge is being constructed on McClellands Road at Barkers Vale to replace a bridge washed away in the floods, and this should be open to traffic by this afternoon (Monday 3 April 2017), restoring access to about 20 people.

Work has also started on another temporary bridge on Collins Creek Road. It should be open to traffic by the end of the week, restoring access to about 50 people who are currently isolated.

A bridge at Sawpit Creek also has been lost, isolating about 20 people. An alternate route suitable for 4WD vehicles is available through the Border Ranges National Park and back to Bendalls Road. Council is liaising with National Parks and Wildlife Services for approval to bring the route up to a 2WD standard, and this is expected to be completed in the next two days.

Council staff and emergency services also have been assisting flood-affected residents and groups in the clean-up of the flood affected areas of Kyogle. Council wishes to thank the Kyogle SES volunteers in particular for their efforts over the last few days, as well as the Kyogle Fire and Rescue Brigade and the Kyogle Rural Fire Services for helping out with the clean up work over the weekend.

Residents were evacuated from a number of areas over Thursday and Friday night, including the Woodenbong camp grounds, Wiangaree, the Kyogle caravan park and the low lying areas of The Flats and Fawcetts Street in Kyogle. Many businesses were also inundated with flood waters in the Kyogle CBD.

Council wishes to thank all the residents and business owners affected by these evacuations for their cooperation and understanding during the lead up to the flood peaks.

Also, a big thank you goes out to those volunteer support service groups such as the Red Cross, Lions, CWA, and ADRA as well as volunteers from the local community who manned evacuation centres in Woodenbong, Wiangaree and Kyogle.

The Richmond River flood levels peaked at 15.95m at Wiangaree and 17.5m at Kyogle. The 2008 flood peaked at 16.9m at Wiangaree and 18.8m at Kyogle, making the 2017 event the second largest flood on record since the devastating 1954 flood.

The newly constructed flood levee and spillway in Kyogle passed its first true test with flying colours. The new flood mitigation structures provided the additional warning time and safe evacuation route that they were designed to provide, as well as reducing the velocity of flood waters through the township, minimising damages.

The off-stream water storage dam also proved its worth, with the stored water remaining untouched by flood waters. This means that Kyogle will have a clean water supply while the Richmond River remains turbulent, saving Council and the community the cost and health risks associated with treating dirty flood water.

Council's general manager Graham Kennett has thanked residents who have reported flood damage to date and urged people to continue submitting damage reports to Council on 6632 1611 or through the council@kyogle.nsw.gov.au e-mail address.

"It is important that all flood damage is reported and recorded so that we are aware of the full extent of the damaged areas and to allow us to prioritise the repair and restoration works," he said.

"Council's priority is to restore access to those people who remain isolated, and with the construction of the two temporary bridges and other actions including the opening up of detours we hope to have that completed by Friday at the latest.

"The flood has caused serious problems and major damage across a wide area, but with the continued help and support of the community and the commitment and dedication of Council staff, we will get through this together."

A Natural Disaster declaration has been made for the Kyogle Local Government Area, meaning Council and some flood-affected residents will be able to access disaster assistance funding through the jointly-funded Commonwealth-State Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA).

The following assistance is available under the NDRRA:

- Help for eligible people whose homes or belongings have been damaged;
- Support for affected local councils to help with the costs of cleaning up and restoring damaged essential public assets;
- Concessional interest rate loans for small businesses, primary producers and non-profit organisations;
- Freight subsidies for primary producers; and
- Grants to non-profit organisations.

For information on personal hardship and distress assistance, contact the Disaster Welfare Assistance Line on 1800 018 444.

To apply for a concessional loan, grant or freight subsidy, contact the NSW Rural Assistance Authority on 1800 678 593 or visit raa.nsw.gov.au.

For further details on disaster assistance please see the web site below;

<https://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/for-the-community/severe-weather-north-east-nsw.html>

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