

Good morning Anna

Please see below NSW SES's responses to questions taken on notice:

Mr WARREN KIRBY: My question is to the SES. When it comes to preparedness, particularly in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley, where are the population numbers coming from? Is that from the Reconstruction Authority? Is that from SES? It's a concern specifically related to the '22 flooding events where there was a gross mismatch between the numbers that were in the growth areas and what was understood to be there by the SES at the time.

Answer

Infrastructure NSW (and now the NSW Reconstruction Authority) developed a Hawkesbury Nepean property database to determine population, dwelling and vehicle numbers using a range of source datasets including detailed property data, Australian Bureau of Statistics population to dwelling ratios etc.

The database includes projected development based on permissible development, DPHI future projections and proposed development scenarios.

The evacuation areas are determined by the NSW SES up to the Probable Maximum Flood and are then used to interrogate the database for emergency planning and evacuation modelling purposes.

The NSW SES Risk Analytics works closely with the NSWRA in developing and refining the Hawkesbury Nepean property database.

Based on the above we are not aware of a "gross mismatch between the numbers that were in the growth areas and what was understood to be there by the SES at the time."

Mr WARREN KIRBY: The specific example that I'm thinking of is Marsden Park. There was a proposal to evacuate Marsden Park based on the assumption that there were around 2,700 people there when, in fact, there are closer to 30,000 people in that suburb. The proposal was to evacuate it. There's a single road that gets out of that suburb onto Richmond Road. It was assumed that that was a good call to make, until people in the local area pointed out that these numbers are nowhere near what is expected. In the meetings that you're having with RA about preparedness, how much is population factoring into those meetings? And is it having RA in charge of that, having SES in charge of that or having a LEMO in charge of that?

Answer

The NSW SES and NSWRA have not assumed a population of 2,700 for the area.

The current suburb boundary for Marsden Park has changed over the last 10 years. The previous suburb covered development west of Richmond Road which is split between the new suburb of Melonba with the rest in the new Marsden Park boundary. The population in those areas would be in the order of 20,000 to 30,000 when development in Melonba is complete.

Part of the old Marsden Park suburb east of Richmond Road is now in the new suburb of Angus.

There were a number of proposed developments in what was in the past referred to as Marsden Park North (now Angus) and West Schofields. The Marsden Park North proposed development is not going ahead as determined by a State Planning Panel decision.

The SES has a number of evacuation areas (subsectors) in the area covered by Melonba, Marsden Park and Angus with different trigger levels based on the topography. These subsectors would be evacuated progressively based on flood warnings indicating that the various trigger levels would be exceeded. The entire suburb of Marsden Park would not be evacuated all at the same time.

Evacuation routes for all these subsectors have been mapped in detail and closure heights are taken into account for the subsector triggers. Marsden Park west and Melonba now have three internal evacuation routes to Richmond Road. Additional lane capacity for Richmond is planned by Transport for NSW.

SES warning strategies and evacuation modelling take into account all of the above exposure information.

NSWRA and NSW SES work closely in maintaining the HN property database together and all available information is factored into evacuation planning and modelling (see FEM report released in 2023). Both agencies are working on a new round of evacuation modelling based on updated information and various future scenarios.

Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards
Belinda



Belinda Holl

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