



Wagga Wagga  
City Council

# Flood Futures

## MINUTES: General Community Information Session

Main City and North Wagga Levee Upgrade Project- detailed design and options for North Wagga

**Date:** 19 March 2015

**Location:** Wagga Wagga Council Chambers

### ***In attendance***

28 community members

**Councillors:** Mayor Rod Kendall, Deputy Mayor Councillor Dallas Tout, Councillor Greg Conkey, Councillor Gary Hiscock, Councillor Andrew Negline

**Council Staff:** Director Corporate Services Craig Richardson (Facilitator), Director Infrastructure Heinz Kausche, Director Planning and Regulatory Services Andrew Crakanthorp, Manager Engineering Alex Fenwick, Acting Manager Corporate Strategy, Governance & Communications Nicole Johnson, Project Coordinator Kym Holbrook, Strategic Partner Corporate Strategy & Communications Brett Koschel, Community Engagement Officer Lauren Fitzgerald, Business Support Infrastructure Jessica Crawford

**State Emergency Service (SES):** Region Controller David Buchtman, Community Engagement Coordinator Ian Leckie

**NSW Public Works:** Manager Clients and Project Delivery Fred Spain

**Apologies** General Manager Phil Pinyon, Councillor Andrew Negline, Councillor Kerry Pascoe, Councillor Yvonne Braid, Councillor Paul Funnell, Councillor Kevin Poynter, Councillor Julian McLaren

### **Comments, Statements, Questions and Answers**

**Q. Will the new levee design still allow it to be used for recreational purposes?**

RESPONSE: Yes – ramps and footpaths etc will also form part of the design.

**RESIDENT COMMENT: During the last flood, the water stayed in North Wagga for two weeks, I think you need to remove the levees to allow it to flow.**

RESPONSE: As soon as Council could gain access it put in pumps and cut parts of the North Wagga levee to help it move, but we had to wait until the river was low enough.

**Q. What is happening with the levee at the new trotting track development?**

RESPONSE: The flood modelling formed part of the development application. The buildings will be built up, but the track is designed to go under water for flood

events that exceed a one in twenty year event. The Development Application (DA) was considered by the Southern Regional Joint Planning Panel on 9 April 2015 and the Panel deferred a decision on the DA and has requested the applicant to provide additional information to Council to allow the DA to be fully addressed.

**RESIDENT COMMENT: There should be a big list of things that North Wagga residents cannot do, like no woodpiles, or colour bond fences etc.**

RESPONSE: Once a decision is made by Council on the preferred option, the Floodplain Risk Management Plan will be updated, and the Development Control Plans will be changed / amended.

**Q. If you raise the North Wagga levee will more residents downstream be affected?**

RESPONSE: No – only upstream is affected.

**Q. Would evacuations still take place if you raised the North Wagga levee?**

SES RESPONSE: Yes. With most options evacuations would still occur. Even though you may not get water through the homes, there would be a loss of amenity (power, sewer etc) and the risk of isolation which would require evacuations.

SES UPDATE: Even if the North Wagga Levee is raised there will still come times when the new levee would be breached or compromised, so there will be further future evacuation orders issued for North Wagga. There may also be orders issued for isolation depending on each particular flood circumstance.

**Q. Are evacuation costs included in the AAD figures?**

RESPONSE: No, they are not

**Q. Is the bank near the racecourse and as far as the Gobba Bridge and also Marshalls Creek area included in the designs?**

RESPONSE: Yes – the designs are the full city length. It looks at the entire structure and completely upgrades it.

**Q. Will this have an impact on the Riverside project?**

RESPONSE: It's a separate project, but the upgraded levee will be incorporated into any future designs.

**Q. Many mayors ago, the upgrade was also going to include lighting. Does it still?**

RESPONSE: No, lighting is not a part of it. The walking

tracks etc are, but no lighting.

**Q. The rules on the number of people who can live in North Wagga determines the number of houses, which would also determine the number of people the SES can evacuate. I cannot see how the SES can get all the people out.**

RESPONSE: After 1974 planning controls were introduced restricting no new dwellings in North Wagga. There are no restrictions on the numbers of people in those dwellings.

SES RESPONSE: We adjust our evacuation timelines based on the number of people. This is also dependant on adequate warnings being given from the Bureau of Meteorology.

**Q. If you raise houses in North Wagga, will they have to be to 1 in 100 level?**

RESPONSE: Yes - approximately 2.4m above ground level

**Q. How do you assess the damage of the earth/levee after a flood?**

RESPONSE: In this instance we've done geotechnical testing. Infiltration and compaction tests are also done. During the floods, staff are constantly walking the levee banks day and night monitoring, and checking for any seepage or weak points.

**Q. You mentioned staff walking the levee during a flood. With the technical equipment and GPS available in this day and age, have you considered the CSU's spatial monitoring from a satellite?**

RESPONSE: No we haven't, but we certainly are interested in anything that may assist.

**Q. Have you looked at Marshalls Creek area?**

RESPONSE: Yes the Major Overland Flow Flood Studies (MOFF's) look at urban areas and local catchments. The issue is incorporating the Flood modelling from the Riverine Flooding with Overland Flooding.

**Q. To the SES – how do you determine evacuation timeframes? Last flood we got very little notice late at night.**

SES RESPONSE: We rely on information from the BOM (Bureau of Meteorology) regarding river heights etc. Changes can happen very quickly. We don't want to cry wolf by issuing lots of false alarms. The best thing to do is to listen to the local ABC radio for updates. In 2012, the BOM revised their flood prediction upwards for North Wagga just 5 hours before the new peak was due to arrive at Wagga

**Q. In regards to Eunony Bridge Road – You should have built the road so it was flood proof, and doesn't affect the floodwaters.**

RESPONSE: There is no negative impact on the floodwater by the road design. To flood proof the road would be a huge job, and Council doesn't have the money available to do that.

**Q. If houses were raised in North Wagga, would the levee banks be removed?**

RESPONSE: Council would need to make a decision on that. Removing the levee has not been allowed for in the cost analysis of raising houses.

**Q. So raising houses would protect houses only? Not services etc**

RESPONSE: Correct – there would still be no amenities, just houses would be protected.

**Q. Have you considered tightening the building guidelines in North Wagga? No big sheds, small ones only, collapsible fences etc. This would help the water to flow and minimise some damage**

RESPONSE: This sort of thing will form part of the bigger picture of development controls into the future.

**Q. If voluntary purchase was an option, who would value the houses?**

RESPONSE: Not Council. It would be state valuer or independent valuers.

**Q. How long would voluntary purchase take?**

RESPONSE: Council would have to set a timeframe (possibly 5, 10, or 15 years).

**Q. Will this presentation be available to the public?**

RESPONSE: Yes it will be on the FloodFutures website.

**RESIDENT COMMENT: It looks like the levee options give you the best return, from both an economic and social point.**

**Q. I'm a Mason Street resident with a house 1m off the ground. If our street flooded again, and I decided to take my tinny boat and head into town and come back, would the SES kick me out?**

SES RESPONSE: Yes you would be issued an evacuation order. Whether you chose to obey the order is up to you. There is great potential for loss of sewer and phones etc, which is a concern to public health and community safety.

**Q. Insurance companies won't insure properties in the CBD or are charging ridiculous amounts all because we got evacuated. Can Council educate these people?**

RESPONSE: Council makes information available to insurance companies. If any residents are having difficulties with their insurance companies they can contact Council to see if any further assistance or information can be provided. The main city levee upgrade will also assist in the future.

**Q. Can you give any guarantee that what is decided on by this Council won't be changed by the next?**

RESPONSE: We cannot guarantee that. All the projects are dependent upon funding and how quick they are implemented.