

**Submission
No 8**

REVIEW OF THE NSW RECONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY ACT 2022

Organisation: Narrabri Shire Council

Date Received: 2 May 2024

Our Reference: 2155952 RW:DLA
Your Reference:
Contact Name: Donna Ausling

Mr Clayton Barr MP
Chair
Joint Select Committee on the NSW Reconstruction Authority
Parliament of New South Wales
Parliament House, Macquarie Street
Sydney, NSW 2000

By email: nswreconstructionauthority@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Tuesday, 2 May 2024

RE: Joint Select Committee on the NSW Reconstruction Authority – Review of the NSW Reconstruction Authority Act 2022 – Narrabri Shire Council Submission

Dear Sir

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback in relation to the NSW Reconstruction Authority inquiry.

It is understood that the following terms of reference (ToRs) are applicable to the current review process:

The functions of the Joint Select Committee on the NSW Reconstruction Authority under section 93 of the NSW Reconstruction Authority Act 2022 (the 'Act') includes reviewing the Act to determine whether—

- (a) *the policy objectives of the Act remain valid, and*
- (b) *the terms of the Act remain appropriate for securing the objectives.*

Local Context

Narrabri Shire is a [local government area](#) in the [North West Slopes](#) region of NSW. The primary settlement of Narrabri is located adjacent to the [Namoi River](#) and at the confluence of the [Newell](#) and [Kamilaroi Highways](#). The local government area (LGA) is strategically positioned halfway between Sydney and Brisbane, and is considered to be resource-rich. Key local industries include mining and agriculture. At the last census (2021) the resident population was 12,721 persons.

Narrabri Shire Council's vision is articulated in the Community Strategic Plan as follows:

"Narrabri Shire will be a strong and vibrant regional growth centre providing a quality living environment for the entire Shire community."

The township of Narrabri is considered to be one of the most flood prone settlements in NSW. The community of Wee Waa, located west of Narrabri, is periodically completely isolated by flood waters for long periods (up to two weeks) and is protected by a ring




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levee. Narrabri Shire contains a number of vulnerable and at-risk communities that are flood-affected. These communities have a high Aboriginal population, low socio-economic base and are also ageing in nature.

Narrabri Shire Council provides the following feedback to the Joint Select Committee in relation to the review of the *NSW Reconstruction Authority Act 2022*.

1. It is considered that the initial focus on community-based resilience has shifted following a series of recent natural disasters. Consequently, the defined objectives and organisational purpose do not appear to accurately align with those presently espoused by the NSW Reconstruction Authority.
2. It is acknowledged that if resilient populations handle future natural disasters more efficiently, the reliance on the concept of resilience by policymakers to avoid future government interventionism is unsurprising. Resilience, however, is a social ability that is built within communities and can only be effectively developed if the same social capital is shared. This is frequently not the case in marginalised and socially disadvantaged communities, and those located within rural and regional areas. On this basis, it is recommended that the objectives of the Act be amended to place appropriate context around community resilience and a greater focus on critical planning and preparedness with communities, businesses and all levels of government to reduce the impact natural disasters have on communities.
3. In relation to item (b) of the terms of reference, in accordance with the LGNSW Advocacy Priorities for 2023/2024 in respect of natural disaster resilience, wherever practicable the following should be accurately reflected or captured in the corresponding terms of the Act:
 - Increase of financial support and funding for restoration, remediation and betterment of local community infrastructure, including water and sewerage assets, as well as early warning and monitoring systems, both in advance of disasters where the risks are identified and in the recovery stage.
 - Permanently embed State and federal government funded Community Recovery Officers into councils across NSW in recognition of the increasing frequency, scale and long recovery timeframes of natural disasters.
 - Commit to proactive strategies to respond to natural disasters and adapt to climate risks.

4. Achievement of an appropriate line of sight and harmonisation wherever possible between the NSW Reconstruction Authority Act 2022 and the national emergency management legislative framework including, but not limited to, the National Emergency Declaration Act 2020.

Should you require any additional information or clarification in this regard you are invited to contact Council's Director Planning and Sustainability, Ms Donna Ausling at [REDACTED] or by emailing council@narrabri.nsw.gov.au.

Yours faithfully,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Rob Williams.

Rob Williams
General Manager