

**Submission  
No 49**

## **REVIEW OF THE NSW RECONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY ACT 2022**

**Name:** The Hon. Kevin Hogan

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## The Hon Kevin Hogan MP

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Shadow Minister for Trade and Tourism  
Deputy Manager of Opposition Business  
Federal Member for Page

12<sup>th</sup> June 2024

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

Dear Mr. Barr,

Currently, our region does not have a clear future and the recovery is not going well. There is great confusion, disappointment, and sadness within the community. I say this with humility and no blame, but blunt honesty.

The Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation (NRRC) began a strategy of removing those in danger from the floodplain. Over 2,000 homes were identified to be unsafe by the NRRC. Less than half of the homes identified by the NRRC will be bought back. Also, some families who accepted a buyback, bought back on the floodplain. This shows the failure of the NRRC, (now NSW Reconstruction Authority) plan.

Individuals and families had nowhere to live and had to make decisions about their immediate future. Some people started putting money back into their homes and commenced renovations immediately. Others decided to sell their properties on the private market. The new property owners did not qualify for the buyback.

After the completion of buybacks, maybe 700 to 900 of the 2000 homes identified by the NSW Reconstruction Authority will have been bought back. This means over 1000 homes will remain on the flood plain. Those individuals and families will be no safer and are still at risk. The CBD, industrial estates, businesses, villages, farmers and the road network are no safer.

**The strategy of withdrawing from the floodplain has failed. Flood mitigation is the only strategy that will give the region a sustainable future and safety.**

Over \$800m has been spent on the Resilient Homes Program. None of this money has lowered the level of the next flooding event. This means no home, CBD Business or industrial estate occupant, on the flood plain is any safer. They will be unable to get affordable insurance. Credit finance for buyers looking to invest will also be difficult. It will become a low socio-economic area.

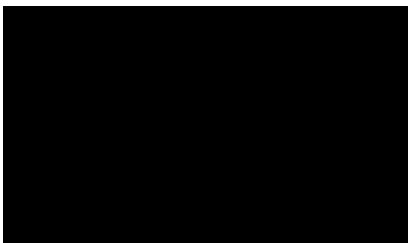
The path ahead must include a public commitment to flood mitigation. The CSIRO report is crucial to this. If the community knows a metre or more will be taken off future flood events they will invest and live in confidence in the Northern Rivers. A feasibility analysis could be done to identify some of the findings the CSIRO hydrology report would support to speed up the mitigation works.

A vision document focussing on economic recovery, economic development, regional workforce, housing, water security, residential and industrial land development is also needed. CSIRO have been identified by the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (NRJO) to be best place to deliver this.

The McKell Institute, The Cost of Extreme Weather Report, has found that between 2005-2022 the Federal Government spent \$23.99 billion on disaster recovery and relief and only \$1.51 billion on disaster prevention. This needs to change. Flood mitigation is the best prevention option for the Northern Rivers to grow and prosper. It will also save future Governments therefore taxpayers billions of dollars by mitigating future disasters. The 2022 disaster alone is measured as a \$15 billion event.

The Government on all levels must act. You as decision makers will determine whether the next major flooding event in this region kills people, destroys people's lives financially, or the region has been made safer. Mistakes have been made and significant amounts of public funds have been spent with marginal return. This can be rectified with a commitment to flood mitigation and a vision strategy for the region.

Kind Regards



**Kevin Hogan MP**  
Federal Member for Page