

2 July 2024

Chair of the NSW Legislative Council Standing Committee on
State Development
Parliament House
6 Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Submission via email
State.Development@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Chair,

Answers to Questions on Notice: Inquiry into the ability of local governments to fund infrastructure and services

Thank you for the opportunity to provide responses to questions taken on notice by Caroline Foley, Northern Beaches Council, when appearing before the Legislative Council Standing Committee on State Development on 3 June 2024 for the 'Inquiry into the ability of local governments to fund infrastructure and services'.

Question on notice 1

Dr AMANDA COHN: That was helpful. Just to follow that up—and this might need to be taken on notice—it sounds like you're talking about most of that cost incurred being damage to assets that needed repair.

CAROLINE FOLEY: It depends on the storm. It can be a lot of clean-up—trees on roads and the like—but it can also be significant infrastructure damage, which takes a longer time to repair. Being a coastal council, a lot of the damage, except for that February 2022 instance where there was a special exception, seawalls and things like that are not actually covered under the arrangements.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Are you able to, on notice, provide a breakdown of that \$14 million? I'm sure it's more now that you've had that \$7 million—I'm sorry to hear that. I'm really interested in what the actual costs are and what council is paying for in that recovery.

CAROLINE FOLEY: Yes, we're happy to do that.

Source: Report on proceedings before Standing Committee on State Development – Inquiry into the ability of local governments to fund infrastructure and services – Uncorrected, 3 June 2024, p 28.

1. What types of costs are incurred in response to a natural disaster?

The Northern Beaches is highly exposed to a raft of natural hazards with current data indicating:

- Over 22,000 properties are affected by flood;
- 19,000 properties are bush fire prone;
- 63,000 properties exposed to moderate to high geotechnical risk, and
- close to 5000 properties affected by coastal hazards.

The recently released NSW State Disaster Mitigation Plan estimates that by 2060 the Northern Beaches will have the highest Total Average Annual Losses in NSW by 2060, with estimated losses of close to \$1 billion dollars per annum to the built environment alone.

The following table sets out the types of costs incurred by Council in the past 5 years for natural disasters.

Northern Beaches Council

Natural disaster declarations - 2019/20 to 2023/24

Event	Costs	Disaster funding received*	Net cost to Council to date	Types of costs
AGRN 878 NSW Storms: 26 November 2019 onwards	\$906,468	(\$537,640)	\$368,828	Extensive clean up works for fallen trees and branches – trees over roads are eligible for funding.
AGRN 898 NSW Storms and Floods: 15 January 2020 onwards	\$979,855	(\$944,872)	\$34,984	Removal of fallen trees and branches down during storm, blocking roads and footpaths, jetting of stormwater pits and pipes and landslips
AGRN 960 NSW Storms and Floods 10 March 2021 onwards	\$334,587	(\$275,334)	\$59,254	Flood debris removal from waterways, stormwater pipe jetting, sand for sand-bagging buildings, traffic control and emergency stabilisation of embankments.
AGRN 993 Northern Beaches severe storm as of 19 December 2021	\$2,203,910	-	\$2,203,910	Extensive clean up works for fallen trees and branches and damaged street furniture.
AGRN 1012 NSW Severe Weather and Flooding from 22 February onwards	\$7,918,609	(\$4,775,538)	\$3,143,071	Significant damage to infrastructure along with clean up works. Included several significant landslips and extensive road damage.
AGRN 1025 NSW Severe Weather and Flooding from 27 June 2022 onwards	\$1,788,339	-	\$1,788,339	Significant road damage requiring heavy patching, drainage and pavement repairs caused by a sinkhole within Manly Corso and removal of damaged, hanging or fallen branches and trees
AGRN 1119 NSW East Coast Flooding from 1 April 2024	\$361,999	-	\$361,999	Emergency works to stabilise road embankments and clean up fallen trees and rocks along with repairing damaged roads and stormwater infrastructure.
TOTAL	\$14,493,768	(\$6,533,383)	\$7,960,384	

* A number of claims are under assessment by the relevant NSW Government departments

Question on notice 2

The CHAIR: Does your council invest in apprentices and trainees? If so, what is the percentage of your workforce?

CAROLINE FOLEY: We do. I'm not sure of the percentage, but I can get that back to you.

Source: Report on proceedings before Standing Committee on State Development – Inquiry into the ability of local governments to fund infrastructure and services – Uncorrected, 3 June 2024, p 30.

2. Does your council invest in apprentices and trainees? If so, what is the percentage of your workforce?

Northern Beaches Council currently has 18 roles for apprentices and trainees, which equates to 1.4% of the workforce.

The successful Apprenticeship and Traineeship Program provides paid opportunities in areas including Childcare, Property, Finance, Youth and Community Development, Bushcare and Biodiversity, Traffic and Transport, Information Technology, Library Services and Customer Service. Many of our trainees and apprentices go on to secure a temporary or permanent position and grow with the Council.

Should you require any further information or assistance in this matter, please contact Caroline Foley

Yours faithfully

Caroline Foley
Chief Financial Officer

Endorsed under delegation:

Kelly Loveridge
Chief Operating Officer