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Council natural disaster road restoration priorities

With the Warrumbungle Local Government Area (LGA) being the subject of several Natural Disaster declarations and the first funding being approved for the recovery, Council has identified its road restoration priorities.

“The Warrumbungle Shire has an extensive road network,” said Warrumbungle Shire Council Mayor, Cr Ambrose Doolan. “So as to achieve the most expedient and cost-effective recovery the Council is going to be looking at a systematic way of managing the restoration works.”

“To maximise the amount of funding assistance, Council’s entire regional and rural road network of 2,370km had to be inspected, photographs taken of the damage, assessments made of the restoration work required and estimate of costs. This process took several months to complete following the November 2021 events. Over 1,770 individual defects have been identified throughout the LGA.”

“The combined Natural Disaster events beginning in November 2021 have resulted in massive claims for assistance with road repairs of almost \$14M,” explained Cr Doolan.

“That amount includes emergency repairs stemming from the first declared Natural Disaster in November 2021, and we are yet to make claims for the most recent events!”

“Unfortunately, more damage is expected with widespread rain this week.”

“Council has been working within the confines of the State and Federal Government rules for financial assistance in Natural Disasters, and is restricted in the kinds of works that can be done before funding is approved.”

“Applications for funding are being made in works packages, with nine packages submitted. To date, only three packages have been approved by the NSW Government totalling \$1.32M.”

“The recovery from this disaster is going to take some time. With the amount of damage to the road network I appreciate that everyone is finding it difficult at the moment but unfortunately it is going to take time to have the roads restored” said Cr Doolan.

“The process to apply for funding is a long and complicated one that requires a significant amount of effort and the Council staff have been working hard to put in a funding claim worthy of the extent of damage done to the road network.”

“Added to that the staff have been hindered by the ongoing wet weather and ongoing storm events not only causing further damage to the road network but also, and frustratingly so, repairs that have been carried out have been damaged.”

“On top this there are lengthy delays in receiving supplies and materials needed for works. It is expected to take up to two years to complete restoration works across the road network” explained Cr Doolan.

“Council will be looking to carry out rehabilitation works in a systematic manner and priority will be given to problems with major, Category 1, roads first. These include Black Stump Way, Vinegaroy Road, Warrumbungles Way, Baradine Road, Forest Road, Purlewaugh Road and Timor Road. Whilst plant and equipment are in these areas, Council will work on the Category 2 and 3 roads,” said Cr Doolan.

“Council staff have been working additional hours and contractors, if we can find them, will also be used but this is going to be a long recovery.”

“I ask for the patience and understanding of residents and road users while this recovery takes place” said Cr Doolan.

“Finally, with the continued wet conditions, road users are urged to take caution not only in the Warrumbungle LGA but across the State,” concluded Cr Doolan.

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