



The Hon Barry O'Farrell MP

Premier of NSW

Minister for Western Sydney

MEDIA RELEASE

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IMPROVING LITHGOW'S FLOOD PREPAREDNESS

NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell and Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner today announced more than \$4 million for flood mitigation work to get underway in Lithgow.

Minister for the Environment, Robyn Parker, and Bathurst MP, Paul Toole, joined Mr O'Farrell and Mr Stoner at Farmers Creek for the announcement.

Mr O'Farrell said Farmers Creek would be widened and bank stabilisation work would be carried out as a result of the funding commitment.

"Flooding in urban and rural NSW costs our economy about \$250 million each year, which doesn't take into account the severe emotional distress that is experienced within the community," Mr O'Farrell said.

"The Lithgow area is particularly prone to flooding and up to 200 homes are potentially at risk from flash flooding events.

"The widened channel will provide additional flood storage capacity and reduce flood levels, providing protection to the adjacent residential area of Hermitage Flat.

"Residents can thank the diligent efforts of local Member, Paul Toole, whose strong representations on this issue led to today's announcement."

The NSW Government will provide \$4.3 million to Lithgow City Council for Stage 2 of the Farmers Creek Lithgow Flood Mitigation Scheme. Council will contribute \$2.1 million towards the project.

Mr Stoner said major floods in 1986 and 1992 inundated more than 100 residences in the Hermitage Flat area, causing substantial damage because the area was difficult to evacuate.

"Lithgow experienced a severe storm event in March 2012 and flood mitigation work completed on the western end of Farmers Creek proved its worth," Mr Stoner said.

"Without the previous work carried out in the vicinity of Watsford Oval, homes may well have been flooded.

"Works that have already been completed span 370 metres and include precast concrete bank protection units.

“The funding has been sourced from the NSW Government’s Floodplain Management Program, which aims to reduce the impact of flooding on communities.”

Ms Parker said this was one of 60 recent new grants totalling \$20.8 million awarded to local councils to plan for, and to reduce risks and impacts of flooding.

“Councils across NSW will receive funding assistance for projects to plan for flooding and to build and maintain infrastructure to reduce the impact of flooding,” Ms Parker said.

“The NSW Government plays a key role by helping manage flood threats faced by their residents, not only through financial assistance for grants but also through technical guidance.

“The Office of Environment and Heritage advises and supports local government on modelling, management options, planning and environmental considerations, and community education about flood risk.”

Mr Toole said the NSW Government recognises the damage that flooding can cause and is proud to support Lithgow Council with funds and expertise to help them prepare and minimise the risk to their community.

“Since the NSW Liberal & Nationals Government was elected in 2011 the NSW Government has provided Council with almost \$4.6 million in funding to prevent flooding.

Lithgow Council grant monies under the Floodplain Management Program as follows;

1. Lithgow Flood Study Review – 2012-13 round of offers - \$120,000. Currently in progress. Council contribute \$60,000.
2. Voluntary Purchase of 69 Sandford Avenue (located beside Farmers Creek in a high hazard zone) – 2013-14 round of offers - \$134,000. Currently in progress. Council contribute \$67,000.
3. Farmers Creek Stage 2 – Survey, investigation and design – 2011-12 round of offers – Completed December 2012. NSW Government \$58,701. Council contributed \$29,351.
4. Farmers Creek Stage 2 Flood Mitigation Scheme – current grant offer announcement of \$4,276,670. Council will contribute \$2,138,335.

More information: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/coasts/Floodgrants.htm>