



TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING

RE: UNITING KINGSCLIFF REDEVELOPMENT (SSD-47105958)

NSW SES & DPHI MEETING

PANEL: JANETT MILLIGAN (CHAIR)
RICHARD PEARSON

OFFICE OF THE IPC: BRAD JAMES
CALLUM FIRTH

NSW STATE
EMERGENCY SERVICE: PETER CINQUE
ELSPETH O'SHANNESY
ANA-MARIA-BIANCA CHITU
GILLIAN WEBBER

DEPARTMENT OF
PLANNING, HOUSING
& INFRASTRUCTURE: PAULINA WYTHES
STEPHEN DOBBS

LOCATION: ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE

DATE: 1:30PM – 2:30PM
FRIDAY, 17th OCTOBER 2025

<THE MEETING COMMENCED

MS JANETT MILLIGAN: Well, hello everyone. Good afternoon and welcome. I'm looking at the screen to ascertain if all our expected participants are on. Oh yes, okay.
5 Yes?

MR CALLUM FIRTH: Do we have Elspeth?

MS MILLIGAN: Is Elspeth ...?
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MR ANA-MARIA-BIANCA CHITU: Hello, good afternoon. Sorry, just getting my camera set up, I apologise.

MS GILLIAN WEBBER: Elspeth was going to attempt to join us, she might be able to join us for part.
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MS MILLIGAN: Okay, so we shouldn't wait for her.

MS WEBBER: No, thank you.
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MR FIRTH: She's here now.

MS WEBBER: Ooh, she's here.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay. So, again, good afternoon and welcome. Before we begin, I'd like to acknowledge that I'm speaking to you from Gadigal land and I acknowledge the traditional owners of all the lands from which we meet virtually today, and I pay my respects to their Elders past and present.
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Welcome to the meeting today to discuss the Uniting Kingscliff Redevelopment currently before the Commission for determination. The Applicant, Uniting/NSW.ACT proposes site preparation works, the construction of a seniors housing development comprising seven buildings ranging from two to four storeys and basement levels, providing a 120-bed residential aged care facility, 199 independent living units, ancillary amenities, and landscaping.
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So, hello, my name is Janett Milligan, I'm the Chair of the Commission Panel, and joining me on the Panel is my fellow commissioner, Richard Pearson. And also with us we have Brad James online, and in the room with me, Callum Firth, both from the Office of the Independent Planning Commission.
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In the interests of openness and transparency and to ensure a full capture of information, today's meeting is being recorded, and a complete transcript will be produced and made available on the Commission's website.
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This meeting is one part of the Commission's consideration of this matter and will form one of several sources of information upon which we will base our determination.

It's important for commissioners to ask questions of attendees and to clarify any issues whenever it's considered appropriate. But of course, if you're asked a question and you're not in a position to answer, please feel free to take the question on notice and provide any additional information to us in writing, and we will then put that information on our website.

Lastly, I just request that all members introduce themselves before speaking for the first time, and for all of us to ensure that we don't speak over the top of each other, just to make sure we get an accurate transcript.

So, with that, let's begin. Thank you and welcome to SES and to the Department. Can I ask perhaps SES, if you could lead us with some introductions, please, and then we'll move to the Department.

Peter, we're not hearing you.

MR PETER CINQUE: I was on the wrong microphone, sorry about that. Peter Cinque with NSW SES, Senior Manager of Emergency Risk Management. And I'll hand over to El.

MS ELSPETH O'SHANNESY: Hi, apologies, my name is Elspeth O'Shannessy (or El), I'm the Manager for Emergency Risk Assessment here at NSW State Emergency Service, and I have my team here as well, Gillian and Ana.

MS MILLIGAN: Thanks, Elspeth.

MS WEBBER: I'm Gill Webber, Coordinator, Risk Assessment in El's team. And I look after regional New South Wales.

MS MILLIGAN: Thanks, Gill.

MS CHITU: And good afternoon, everyone. My name is Ana-Maria Chitu, Planning and Research Officer in the Risk Assessment Team.

MS MILLIGAN: Thank you. And Paulina?

MS PAULINA WYTHES: Hi, everyone. I'm Paulina Wythes, Director of the Social and Diverse Housing Assessments Team at the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure. And with me today are Stephen Dobbs, who I'll hand over for his own introduction.

MR STEPHEN DOBBS: Afternoon, commissioners. My name is Stephen Dobbs and I'm a Team Leader in Paulina's team, the Social and Diverse Housing Assessments Team.

MS MILLIGAN: All right, thank you, thank you all for introducing yourselves. We were pleased to meet with you this afternoon and we have an agenda to guide our discussion. It's a loose agenda; it picks up on major issues in SES submission. So,

that's probably a good place to start. And Peter, maybe I can ask you how you want to organise your team to talk to us.

5 So, basically we'd like you to talk to us about the SES original submission, information that's been provided since, including the Applicant's response to some of the things in your submission, and just help us to understand what your thinking is now at this stage of the assessment of the development and the issues you'd like to talk to us about.

10 **MR CINQUE:** Yes, I might just hand over to El, she's able to, otherwise Ana, because she did the responses. Yes, just to go through that history that you indicated you wanted to hear and identify the issues. And then I can chime in at the end.

15 **MS O'SHANNESSY:** Hi, yes. So, we did provide a number of different responses and I'm just going to bring those up. Just give me one minute, please. So, we provided advice on the – apologies ... Ana, if you have those dates on hand, that would be great.

MS CHITU: I'm actually bringing that up in a second.

20 **MS O'SHANNESSY:** Okay, I've got the dates. Apologies. So, the first advice we provided was on the 13th of June in 2024, and then the second advice was on the 4th – oh sorry, the other way around, 4th of August 2023, and the 13th of June 2024. And then more recently on the 12th of March 2025. And our main concerns around the development were that they were going to increase the potential vulnerability of the
25 occupants, or the number of vulnerable occupants on the site with the proposed increased number of independent living units and aged care squat units.

Ana, did you want to explain a little bit more around those issues?

30 **MS CHITU:** Yes, thank you so much, El. So, in relation to our concerns at the site, so we understand the site currently – the Uniting Kingscliff site is currently licensed to house up to 112 residents, so it is an existing seniors housing site. And the intention is to expand on this, basically to intensify the number of people at the site.

35 Some of our concerns that El mentioned were the vulnerability of the residents to start with, given that a number of them would have significant mobility issues as well as medical conditions that would require specialised equipment, such as being on continuous oxygen or connected to other medical equipment.

40 And given the flood risk at the site, which I can go through if you'd like me to, the flood emergency management that was proposed, particularly for the most vulnerable residents, was that they were going to shelter in place at the site, because the evacuation centres would not have the capability to address their specific needs.

45 And now going into the flood risk at the site, it is impacted by both riverine flooding from the Tweed River as well as overland flows from local catchment runoff, which is a flash flood environment. So, it's a very quick response for the overland flooding,

which may cut the evacuation routes prior to the onset of riverine flooding. In which case, the flood – sorry, apologies, the site would become completely inundated.

And of course, for emergency management, we do look at the, I guess, worst-case scenario, so we do look up to the probable maximum flood event. And the site would experience significance flood depths. I believe – oh, sorry – in excess of 5 metres in the worst-case scenario PMF, and significant flood hazard level, so that’s categorised at H6, which would be a significant risk to life as well as the structures at the site that may be vulnerable to failure.

In terms of the site risk as well, it is what we, I guess, describe as a low flood island, meaning that site access gets cut prior to the site becoming completely inundated. From the Flood Emergency Response Plan that was submitted to us and the flood impact and risk assessment, site access gets cut in a fairly frequent events, so I believe the last evacuation route gets cut in the 1% annual exceedance probability event at the low point in the northern part of the site. And that is in the riverine flooding event, but that access road, as I mentioned before, may be impacted prior to that by flash flooding, which would then impact or delay the ability of people at the site to evacuate.

So, that’s, I guess, a bit of a context on the flood risk. But please let me know if I missed anything or if you have any other questions in relation to that.

MS MILLIGAN: No, thank you, happy for you to keep going.

MR RICHARD PEARSON: Sorry Janett, can I just clarify. Ana, you did say the 1% flood cuts the evacuation route from the site. Was that – I thought that’s what I heard you say.

MS CHITU: Yes, so that is the information we have received in the FIRA and FERP.

MR PEARSON: In the what, sorry?

MS CHITU: In the – sorry, apologies – the flood impact and risk assessment, and the Flood Emergency Response Plan.

MR PEARSON: Oh, sure, sure, sure, okay, thank you.

MS O’SHANNESSY: Ana, I might just add in as well. The area around this site received a number of different flood incidents and flood rescues in the 2022 event, but also more recently in 2025 in March.

MS MILLIGAN: Sorry, can I just clarify, El, what you just said. So, in 2022 and then in March this year, can you just repeat – there were no evacuations at the site but there was flooding in the surrounding streets. Is that what you ...?

MS O’SHANNESSY: Yes, there was indication of flooding in the surrounding streets, with medical emergency transport and also flood rescue and requests for sandbags

around the site. I'd have to double check whether the area was subject to evacuation warnings at the time. But we would have to do that offline, apologies.

MS MILLIGAN: No, that's fine, thank you.

MS CHITU: Would you like me to continue or expand on anything?

MS MILLIGAN: I think we're really happy for you to continue, Ana-Maria, thank you.

MS CHITU: Thank you. Okay. Another, I guess, concern and this leads into one of the concerns we have in relation to the proposed emergency management strategy for this site. Again, reiterating it is impacted both by mainstream riverine flooding which can last up to three days. So, in a probable maximum flood event, the flood gets completely inundated up to 5 metres depth at the site as well as overflow flooding in the proposed buildings.

So again, talking about the probable maximum flood event, all ground floor levels will be completely submerged, and all level 1's of all buildings will experience between over a metre – sorry, apologies – between 0.6 metres, this being the residential aged care facility building, and up to in excess of 1 metre for the rest of the buildings, that being level 1. So, basically ground floor and level 1 in the probable maximum flood will experience overflow flooding. And isolation may last up to four days in this, I guess, worst-case scenario event. And the strategy for the vulnerable people at the site, so, again, people with limited mobility and requiring specialised medical support, is to shelter in place at the site.

Now, that is a big concern considering that in such an event with the buildings being impacted by significant flood forces and flood depths, the buildings may lose power, water, sewerage and all other essential services that will be required for those people to be able to shelter in place at the site, specifically because they have such, I guess, specialised medical needs.

And because of that, the proposal does not demonstrate consistency with the Shelter-in-Place Guideline, specifically point 8 which states that the flood behaviour at the site, considerations around the flood behaviour at the site, with consideration of climate change and assessing up to the probable maximum flood, flash flooding should be the only flood risk present at the site, which is not the case. The site is impacted by mainstream long-duration riverine flooding. Flooding occurs within less than 6 hours and the duration of shelter in place due to isolation is less than 12 hours from the commencement of rainfall, which again it is not the case because of the up to 3 days duration in the probable maximum flood.

And the development, to be suitable for shelter in place, should not be subject to high hazard flooding. So, this would be floodways or high hazard categorised as H5 or H6, which is all surrounding roadways should not be subject to high-hazard flooding. Again, based on the information that was provided to us, the site is completely

inundated and submerged, experiencing H6 or the highest hazard level category in a probable maximum flood.

5 There are other considerations as well in the Shelter-in-Place Guideline, such as, for example, if it's for a sensitive land use, which would be the case for seniors housing, people who have special needs, limited mobility, and they would be unable to independently evacuate.

10 **MS MILLIGAN:** At this point, can I ask if anyone from the Department wanted to contribute to the discussion or to add any comments to Ana-Maria's information about the SES' view particularly in relation to consistency with that guideline.

MR DOBBS: Sorry, Paulina.

15 **MS WYTHES:** You go first, Stephen.

MR DOBBS: You go ahead.

20 **MS WYTHES:** No, no, you go.

MR DOBBS: I would just like to point out as well, and apologies to the SES, they may not have reviewed the latest Flood Emergency Response Plan and documents which were provided to the Department of Planning for assessment. Those documents were reviewed by CPHR and an independent flood consultant as well. So, the latest set of information did make some changes to the proposal. They increased the floor levels by 25 300 millimetres to account for climate change. The crest to the basement was raised to 3.8 metres AHD. Internal staircases were widened to aid with emergency response. And an emergency backup generator was relocated as well.

30 Along with that, there was an updated Flood Emergency Response Plan which provided clear guidance around a staged approach, and three trigger warnings for different levels of flood and different responses, so minor flood warning, a moderate flood warning, and a major flood warning.

35 So, I'd just like to highlight that specifically. Apologies, Commissioner, could you repeat what the question was as well.

MS MILLIGAN: Look, it really was just an invitation to comment, you know, at this point in the conversation, so that's fine.

40 **MR DOBBS:** Yes. Okay.

MS WYTHES: I think just to add –

45 **MR DOBBS:** [Cross-talk 00:21:53] I remember there was specific mention about – sorry.

MS WYTHES: I'll try not to talk – I do – you go.

MR DOBBS: About the Shelter-in-Place Guideline. So, we acknowledge that the Shelter-in-Place Guideline strictly is targeted at [audio glitch 00:22:13]. The Department of Planning along with advice we've received from our independent flood consultant [have stood? 00:22:21] against it, and not necessarily acknowledge that it was a design for this specific flood event, but certainly taken advice from it regarding the adequacy of the shelter-in-place area itself regarding access to power supplies, space, etc.

Paulina, did you have anything else to add?

MS WYTHES: No, I was going to just more at a high level, in terms of SES' relay of their key issues that aligns with our assessment intake on the key issues from SES. So, as Steve has outlined, additional information was provided by the Applicant following the response to submissions, and Stephen has outlined some of the key changes, including the updated FERP. And we did have an independent assessment from a flooding consultant to assist with finalising our views on this particular matter.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay, all right, thank you. Thank you, Department. SES, over to you, let's continue. We've talked about flood risks. We've talked about shelter in place. Let me just check if there's other things you wanted to say about the shelter-in-place approach and emergency management responses. So, can we pick it up there?

MS O'SHANNESSY: Did you want me to talk about that, Ana, or did you want to keep going?

MS CHITU: I think there's one thing I can add to that, and then I'm happy to pass it over to you, El. In relation to emergency management implications for the NSW SES, in a scenario where there's vulnerable people would shelter in place at this high-risk site, this would be a significant risk for us and other emergency services.

And it is likely to require, you know, an increase in resources from the SES and other emergency services for response operations, the re-supply, because, you know, if anything goes wrong and three days is a long time of isolation, and a lot of things can go wrong with this category of vulnerable people, then that would result or could result in increased requirement for government spending on emergency management services.

MS MILLIGAN: Thank you.

MS O'SHANNESSY: I think that was really well laid out by Ana. The only thing I would add to that is, it is very complex to evacuate aged care facilities due to the vulnerability, and there's a number of different research papers and observations made around the complexity and increase in potential fatalities and what not.

So, ideally, it's not a great management to shelter in place or to evacuate aged care facilities, which is probably why the Flood Inquiry ended up recommending vulnerable

facilities not being placed in a flood plain. But noting that there is an existing location there already, albeit though with much less residents on site at the time.

5 **MS MILLIGAN:** So, El, to that last point, a number of people have said this to us, that there is an existing facility and this is in fact a redevelopment. Can you talk a little bit more about that? I think I understand the SES' position; it's in some of your written submission. But can you just talk a bit more about that?

10 **MS O'SHANNESSEY:** Yes. So, while we acknowledge that there is an existing facility, the proposal does significantly increase the number of people that are going to be on site. And by way of virtue, that does increase the exposure and the potential risk on site and the complexities, the number of resources that are likely to be required to either evacuate, to re-supply, to rescue, all of the different measures that may be required as a consequence of it being in that high risk flood plain on a low flood island
15 with vulnerable community member.

I hope that helps explain a little bit further.

20 **MS MILLIGAN:** Yes, to some extent, yes, I think so, thank you, thank you. All right. Let me pause there –

MR DOBBS: Happy to add another thing from the Department's perspective, if that's okay, Commissioner?

25 **MS MILLIGAN:** Yes, Stephen, go ahead, thank you.

MR DOBBS: Thank you. We did get this point reviewed in the independent flood by GRC, so we definitely noted that concern raised by the SES in their submission. GRC Hydro did assess and gave us advice that the proposed design of the centre and Flood
30 Emergency Response Plan would reduce existing burden and risk to emergency services, based upon the existing facility, for the reasons outlined that most residents would be able to self-evacuate ahead of flooding.

35 They noted that the residential aged care facility on site was 114 beds and the proposed is 120, whereas most of the increase in population are in the form of independent living units. Remaining residents could shelter in place safely for the duration of events, based upon the shelter-in-place area proposed. And the GRC have also stated that it's considered to be a 96% reduction in risk over site conditions.

40 Certainly, we appreciate and understand that this is not a greenfield development site, so they have to consider the existing risk to the site in our assessment as well. So, I'll just add that. Thank you.

45 **MS MILLIGAN:** All right. So, should we move on to talk about minimum requirements should the development proceed, which is the next item on our agenda?

MR PEARSON: Janett, can I just ask a clarification on the shelter in place view of SES. So, is your position that you don't support shelter in place for these kinds of

residents at all, or only if it complies with the guideline? I'm just a bit unclear whether you are supportive of shelter in place as a flood management strategy for this kind of, as you described, vulnerable residents. Bearing in mind that some of them will be in that vulnerable state and others may be quite independent living. Can you just unpack that for us?

MS O'SHANNESY: Yes. So, shelter in place is used as an option in emergencies where the risk of evacuating is higher than staying in place. And that's for existing development, so it's a risk management measure the SES uses or adopts after assessing the potential risks of the various options during an event. And as SES is the combat agency for flooding, they would be making the decision whether or not it would be more appropriate to evacuate a certain area, noting the SES plans to areas rather than individual businesses or homes.

And the complexity is, and it's not black and white, so it's not this is okay, and this is not across all sites. As you can probably appreciate, the complexity with this particular site is the potential duration and the potential depth and the consequences and the things that may go wrong is they do shelter in place in this particular location.

So, in previous events, people have sheltered in place, and they've had to be rescued, or they've changed their mind and driven through floodwater. There's been a number of different occasions – 2022 [in Nyngan? 00:31:30] where we've had to do mass flood rescues, and it's just not a viable solution to rely on mass flood rescue as a development – the development to rely on that mass flood rescues, because we can't just pull up a helicopter on everyone's roof, and we can't necessarily get helicopters even up in east coast lows and those sorts of events.

So, there's a number of different complexities. And apologies, it's not a yes or a no answer, but I'm sure you can appreciate ...

MR PEARSON: That's okay, I wasn't expecting a yes or no, I'm just trying to unpack your views on shelter in place more generally. Do you see it as a strategy that can be used for new development? Because you've mentioned existing development at the start of your response there, so is it something that SES can support for new development?

MS O'SHANNESY: It's not something that we support for a new development. We don't support development justifying the lack of an evacuation or supporting evacuation infrastructure to intensify the development. As per the EM01 Flood Risk Management Guidelines Support for Emergency Management and the NSW Government Guidelines for Flash Flood, Shelter in Place.

MS MILLIGAN: Can I just ask if – thank you for that information, it was clear. Is your thinking influenced by the fact that we're talking here about a completely managed site? Because I take your point about people who decide to shelter in place and then they change their mind, and I understand that. And I'm just thinking, do you think differently about a development like this which is a 24-hour serviced facility? Or in fact is that not a relevant consideration?

MS O'SHANNESSY: It's a different consideration. So, there would be considerations around staff access and staff turnover and where the staff are going to go, and fatigue management policies around that place – which is outside the scope of what SES would be managing. But there would be complexities around getting staff in, staff out, and having enough staff on to manage those, and that training around making sure that there are adequate things. Yes, I think it's a different complexity, if that makes sense.

MS MILLIGAN: All right, thank you. All right. Where are we up to? So, do we want to talk about minimum requirements should the development proceed, which is listed on the agenda.

MS O'SHANNESSY: From an SES perspective, sorry?

MS MILLIGAN: Yes, from an SES perspective, and then next on the agenda we have listed the Department's assessment and their recommended conditions. So, I guess at this stage, we're really interested in hearing from the SES, of course I'd invite the Department to also comment, but very interested to hear your views, the SES, thank you.

MS O'SHANNESSY: It may have been addressed in some of the updated information that we haven't seen to date. But some of the key things would be around, there was a basement included, and there's significant risks to life associated with basements. So, having some conditions around those basements. And if there's any potential way of investigating ways to reduce the access risks so that there's more time available and reduce the frequency of that isolation or duration of isolation, that would be ideal. I'm not sure if that's been investigated further. But I might throw to the team as well, who were involved in writing our particular advice on that, if that's okay, Ana.

MS CHITU: Thank you, El. I think the other consideration we mentioned was in relation to the building design and construction considerations. So, given that the site, again looking at the probable maximum flood scenario, to ensure that structure failure is avoided during a flood, noting that the site can get in excess of 5 metres of flood depth and the highest hazard category, so H6 flood hazard level in the probable maximum flood. And that is one of the considerations.

And the other one would be just in relation to risk awareness of future site users. That could, I guess, exacerbate the risk if people, site users and residents at the site are not aware of the flood risk, in conjunction with their medical condition, their vulnerability and their ability or inability to independently evacuate. So, I think there should be, I guess, a way to ensure that they are transparently made aware and informed of the high risk, significant risk of flooding at this site, to ensure that they make an informed decision when they decide to proceed with accessing services or purchasing a property at this future development.

MS MILLIGAN: Richard, any comment?

MR PEARSON: Yes, the basement question is an interesting one. Because I think your advice wanted protecting during PMF, which would be very difficult, I think. So, do you see that as an issue for people trying to access vehicles in a flood and getting stranded and SES having to go in and rescue people. Is that the issue?

MS O'SHANNESY: That's part of the issues, yes, and again, there's research papers around the potential risk to life, I think we've referred to them within our advice. But yes, it does limit people being able to evacuate and access and egress the site during a flood event.

MR PEARSON: Okay. Thank you.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay. So, did we want to then have a general conversation about anything we haven't covered, with reference to the Department's assessment? As you know, the Department has taken what it describes the risk management approach to assessing this issue.

So, I'm just wondering, SES, first, if you'd like sort of just comment generally on that, if there's anything you'd like to say about the assessment. I think you've been very clear in some of your positions and where you stand on various things, but maybe just talk to us about how you view the assessment, the risk-based assessment conducted by the Department. Anything you'd like to add or comment on.

MR CINQUE: Yes, I'll just add something there. The instruction about shelter in place, that would only work (in inverted commas) "up to a certain level" and noting the first ground level is 3.8 metres above 1% and thereon in, even before the PMF, and the facilities would be flooded. So, if people did get out, in the first place they're stuck there, and if the flood kept on going, then they would have to be rescued.

So, that's why shelter in place is not a great option for redevelopment there. Because once they're logged in, then the only option is rescue, and that's really problematic. As El and the others have said, that's a difficult one with aged care patients.

MS MILLIGAN: So, Peter, can I just clarify, some of it was just cutting in and out a little bit. So, are you talking about the independent living units mainly at this point, or are you talking about the whole site?

MR CINQUE: No, the whole site.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay. And so, can you – I'm sorry, but would you mind re-stating, we didn't hear it very clearly in the ...

MR CINQUE: Oh, okay.

MS MILLIGAN: So, you were saying that anything above the 1%, you're saying?

MR CINQUE: Yes, I might just put on a different microphone just in case it stopped coming across clearly.

MS MILLIGAN: It's probably us, not you, don't worry.

5 **MR CINQUE:** Yes, after a certain point, you know, I think it's roughly about 1%, and Ana can get the precise figures, people could stay in place, but then their option to evacuate is cut off because all the evacuation routes are cut. And if the flood keeps on growing, then there will be inundation within the units and the various buildings there.

10 So, it's not a great option to stay there in this redevelopment. Because whilst PMF is mentioned, there's the heights in which you have these effects in themselves are 1-in-200, 1-in-500 upwards, which can happen. The PMF is very rare, but those other events have happened. Even this year, in Taree, we had a 1-in-500 and Lismore a 1-in-2,000, so they're not really remote events.

15 So, proposing shelter in place for this redevelopment, I don't think really works well, because a flood can go higher and then it's that rescue aspect which is really problematic in trying to get them out if they haven't been evacuated. And, you know, that's when moving aged care patients in that way in rescues can result in death.

20 So, I just wanted to add that point, that shelter in place, while it sounds okay, it's really a stop gap up to a certain level, after that, you know, it becomes a very problematic rescue.

25 **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay, thank you, thank you very much, thanks, Peter. Any other comments from SES?

30 **MS O'SHANNESSY:** I did also just want to clarify as well regarding the comments for the Flood Emergency Response Plan. And as per the EMO1 Flood Risk Management Guideline I referred to earlier requiring a site-specific flood response plan as a condition for consent for development is not considered a genuine attempt to manage flood risk for future occupants.

35 The vulnerability or capability of occupants and their ability to enact a plan as well as the flood characteristics of a future event are not known at the time of the plan's creation. And unless occupants are able to self-evacuate for all possible flood events in consideration of future development, and the plan is owned, understood and practised and uncertainties of flooding understood by occupiers, will almost certainly be forgotten or failed to be effective particularly in events where the plan assumptions are overwhelmed.

40 **MS MILLIGAN:** So, can you just clarify for us, El, what you're reading from there.

MS O'SHANNESSY: That's from the EMO1 Flood Risk Management Guideline.

45 **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay.

MS O'SHANNESSY: [Cross-talk 00:44:40] Emergency Management Section A2.4.

MS MILLIGAN: Got it.

MS O'SHANNESY: Thank you.

5 **MS MILLIGAN:** So, Department, any questions you'd like to make at this point?

10 **MR DOBBS:** Yes, thank you. I'd just like to highlight that the Department in their assessment of this application have reviewed the proposal in its entirety, considered public submissions, Council feedback, advice from the independent flooding consultant, as well as advice from the Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water, who have resolved in their latest submission that all issues regarding flooding had been resolved on site.

15 And just that the site [audio glitch 00:45:30] existing aged care with significant flood risk, the proposal does introduce improved flood protection and emergency response measures to that. In forming that position, we have reviewed the Tweed Local Environmental Plan, broader planning and flooding advice, as well as the specific Development Control Plan that applies to this site.

20 The Department supports the shelter-in-place strategy for the residential care facility, given the complexity and risks of relocating. And have highlighted and included conditions of consent as well, including raising the basement entry crest to 4.1 metres to bring it in line with the ground floor of the development, to account for climate change conditions.

25 Conditions that the buildings be flood resistant to the PMF level, including stormwater infrastructure and the permanent implementation of a Flood Emergency Response Plan, worker flood safety induction during construction, and the Operational Plan of Management is to include emergency response measures as well.

30 I'd like to highlight that should the IPC require, the Department would support including a condition that would require the provision of more than 72 hours of emergency supplies, to further strengthen flood preparedness, if required.

35 **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay, thank you, thank you. So, it feels as though we're almost at the end of the conversation, and I have to say it has been very useful for us. Clearly, there are some issues that SES and the Department have different positions on, and I guess it's our job to sort of think some more about that. But you've articulated it well, which has been helpful for us, thank you.

40 So, I am going to put out a last call, if anyone would like to make any last comments, or Richard, if you'd like to raise any topics or ask questions before we finish.

45 **MR PEARSON:** No, just to clarify, a final point of clarification from me, and it's probably more for the Department than SES. But, so the 1-in-100-year flood evacuation route gets cut at – so the evacuation route gets cut at the 1-in-100-year flood, so is the expectation that shelter in place will be a strategy for the independent

living units in that event, as well as that sort of more managed response in any flood event for the residential aged care facility?

5 **MR DOBBS:** Good afternoon. My understanding is that there would in a 1%, there would be at least 6 hours of warning time, so before the evacuation is cut off, is my understanding, the advice we received from our independent flooding consultant. And certainly, able-bodied people who could evacuate to the school are encouraged to do so. Those who could not, the shelter in place is the backup for that.

10 **MR PEARSON:** Okay. Thank you.

MS MILLIGAN: All right. Any other last comments from you or your team?

15 **MS O'SHANNESY:** I was just going to jump in there quickly to emphasise with regards to the school relocation. It's not always feasible to open all evacuation centres for operations. So, that's determined during an event. So, the reliance of a particular evacuation centre probably shouldn't be used to justify a potential future development. And it's not – and we're not trying to be difficult, we're just trying to make sure that people are safe in the future, and we don't see lots of people at risk.

20 **MS MILLIGAN:** I understand. What we understand is the school, yes, evacuation centre, the alternative evacuation centre in the locality is the TAFE further up the hill. So, are we okay to assume that an evacuation centre would be established?

25 **MS O'SHANNESY:** It would depend on the particular event. it's likely that it would happen, but it would be requiring a lot of consultation with the various emergency services during a particular event, and the resources available to staff and source those particular sites. It's also subject to change, so the evacuation centres get assessed on their suitability quite regularly, so the particular sites may be revised pending those.
30 There's no particular indication that they are at this stage, but it's just a more strategic kind of note.

35 **MS MILLIGAN:** I understand. Thank you for making that point. Is there any advice you can give us then in assessing. So, we have flood emergency response plans and we've got various sort of modelling advice that the Applicant and the Department have provided, and they do actually assume an evacuation centre, and they assume a couple of different locations. So, if you're saying we can't rely on that, can you give us some advice on how we assess the issue of evacuation?

40 **MS O'SHANNESY:** I think Peter was going to say something, or did you want me to talk?

45 **MR CINQUE:** Yes, the highly dependent patients wouldn't necessarily ... Evacuation centres are really not the best place to send them to, because they're not – evacuation centres are set up for the general population, and those people require, you know, a fair degree of support. So, the strategy with a lot of nursing homes and aged care facilities is to try to evacuate to similar facilities which are outside the flood area where there is support, or to hospitals.

5 So, relying on evacuation centres would be the wrong approach for this one. For the assisted living where people are a bit more mobile, they could go to an evacuation centre or they could go to friends and family in the area. We always see evacuation centres not as the primary place that people go to, but a residual part of the population where they've got nowhere else to go.

10 Yes, so an aged care facility, you really want to move them – and that's where the local health districts and so forth, and ambulance, would try and move them to a similar facility where there's good support. And it's critical for these people, because it can be traumatic being evacuated, but, you know, as long as they're looked after in transit and at the final location, and we can minimise that risk.

15 **MS MILLIGAN:** Thank you. And I noted certainly that the plan does make the point that people, the majority of people do evacuate to family and friends, so it's, yes, there's some complexity in it, for sure. Alright-y.

20 **MS CHITU:** And if I – oh, apologies. If I may add to what Peter mentioned. In addition to the complexity of the needs of the aged care facility residents, also taking into account the warning time, again, that is 6 hours, talking about riverine flooding from the Tweed River. Adding to that is localised flash flooding, which may cut evacuation routes and the broader road network within 15 minutes from the start of the rainfall.

25 So, while we may have a minimum of 6 hours warning time, the complexity to evacuate people with very specific medical needs to a medical facility on a road network that may be impacted by flash flooding prior to the onset of riverine flooding, would add another layer of complexity in that evacuation process.

30 **MS MILLIGAN:** Thank you. Thank you, all. If there are no more final comments or questions, it's just up to me to say thank you very much indeed for your time this afternoon. Your input has been very helpful. Thank you.

35 **MR PEARSON:** Yes, thanks, SES and Department.

[All say thank you]

>THE MEETING CONCLUDED