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Rebecca McGuren
Secretary
Tyalgum District Community Association
PO Box 18
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Via email: newsletter.tdca@gmail.com

Dear Ms McGuren

Flood Damage - Tyalgum Road and Limpinwood / Zara Roads

I refer to your letter dated 5 May 2022, from TDCA president Mic Julien.

We appreciate your acknowledgement of Council's flood response and recovery efforts to date. We have a long list of infrastructure repairs in front of us, with around 2000 individual damages logged so far. We sympathise with the Tyalgum Community, given your main road has been so severely damaged. We have many experienced engineers on staff, and this landslip is one of the worst that they have encountered, and potentially one of the most difficult repairs that will be required following this natural disaster.

All efforts are being made to ensure that the alternate sealed access between Tyalgum and Murwillumbah, being Limpinwood – Zara – Numinbah Roads remains open and in a state that remains safe and accessible for all. We understand the risks that further damage to these roads pose to the community, and agree that this must remain one of Council's top priorities in the recovery phase, along with other similar situations facing communities at Bilambil Heights, Reserve Creek and Uki.

Our response to the questions posed by TDCA are as follows:

1. Council is yet to see the scope or terms of reference for the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation (NRRC). Unless advised otherwise, Council is responsible for managing the repairs to Tyalgum Road and Limpinwood-Zara Roads, as they are Council roads. We are unclear at this stage what, if any, role the NRRC might play in these works. Council has already been discussing the potential for Transport for NSW (TfNSW) to provide resource assistance to help Council manage these works. This has to date included the engagement of GHD, the geotechnical engineering consultants who have commenced their assessment of the major slip sites.
2. The first stage in fixing these landslips is the geotechnical investigations. Stage 1 investigations have been completed, where the engineers assessed the sites for their immediate risks and whether or not they remain safe to travel. This assessment confirmed that Tyalgum Road was unsafe due to the

imminent risk of further land movement. The Limpinwood-Zara slips were considered safe for single lane travel only, with appropriate barriers to ensure vehicle loadings did not worsen the slope instability. These recommendations have been followed. We await Stage 2 geotechnical assessment from GHD, which will involve drilling and soil testing, such that design alternatives can be determined. Once the Stage 2 work is complete, tender packages will be prepared to engage suitably qualified design and construction firms for the works.

3. Tyalgum Road is considered a priority “significant repair” along with Scenic Drive, Reserve Creek Road and Tweed Valley Way at Blacks Drain, as they all have similar scale and complexity of repair. Because each of these projects will have a significant lead time before construction, their “priority” does not reflect that other less critical but more straight forward repairs, such as road patching and drain clearing won’t occur beforehand. I can assure TDCA that while there may not be much action on site, the process has begun and resources have been allocated to these repairs. Limpinwood – Zara Road is not as urgent a priority, as there remains through traffic, however we agree on the critical nature of keeping these roads open so, like repairs on Kyogle Road servicing Uki, we have prioritised resources towards their repair.
4. Council is responsible for responding should Limpinwood – Zara Roads become impassable for any reason. Our plan would be a rapid response to whatever the cause of the closure might be, as we did with all isolated communities in the flood response. We are monitoring the sites weekly and will intervene or seek further expert advice if we consider the risk of closure to be increasing.
5. Numinbah Road will be managed in the same way. It will also be a priority for road maintenance, such as pothole repair. Patching of the large road scours at Boat Harbour and Edwards Lane will commence as soon as resources and weather permits.
6. We cannot provide a better time estimate for the Tyalgum Road repair at this time. There are many variables involved, such as the type and extent of the repair required, and the availability of contractors and materials. We see this as a major risk for delays, as the demand for landslip repair specialists is extremely high across the whole of South East Queensland and the Northern Rivers. If the project is likely to be delayed due to procurement issues, this may be where the NRRRC, Resilience NSW and TfNSW can assist Council.
7. Based on the first stage of geotechnical assessment there is no safe access for vehicles through the slip site. Council is obliged to follow those recommendations, so we will not be facilitating or promoting temporary access through the site. Should pedestrians or bicycles pass the road closure barriers that are in place that is at their own risk. We understand the push from Tyalgum residents for bridging of the slip e.g. a Bailey Bridge. The landslip is some 110m long and extends about 50m above the road level. The risk to any temporary bridge structure due to further movement of the ground from below or above the bridge is considered too high to ensure public safety, when there is a viable alternative access via Chillingham. We feel our limited resources are better spent on fixing Tyalgum Road and Limpinwood – Zara Roads permanently, rather than pursuing further temporary solutions at this time.

8. Council's preference is to provide updates and information to the community via updates to our website at:
<https://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/community/roads-transport/roadworks-closures> summarising rather than releasing technical documents to the community at this time.
9. Funding and grants are not the constraint for fixing these slips. The costs of reinstating the roads will be covered by Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) via Transport for NSW, even if the eventual repairs cost several million dollars. Council has received forward disaster funding from the State which we can apply to things like funding geotechnical investigations, surveys and design. The proposed solutions will be reviewed by TfNSW and approved prior to construction.
10. The Tyalgum Road landslip site has been inspected by the Australian Defence Force, NSW Minister for Regional Transport and Roads and the State Members for Lismore and Tweed. All are supportive of Council's approach. We will be happy to take up any further offers of assistance from the Government to project manage the repairs and/or assist with procurement and construction specialists.

In summary, while road connection to Tyalgum remains a priority for Council, that does not mean that it can be undertaken in a shorter timeframe than the 12 months we have previously advised. We understand the additional time and expense that the diversion through Chillingham imposes, however this is a safe alternate route if driving to conditions and following warning signage and traffic controls.

Please contact the undersigned on 02 6670 2400 should you require further information.

Yours sincerely

Danny Rose
Manager Roads and Stormwater

CC: Councillors