



**Pyrenees**  
Shire Council

# FLOOD RECOVERY PLAN 2022

Summary of Review  
May 2023

## BACKGROUND TO THE PYRENEES FLOOD RECOVERY PLAN

A Pyrenees Flood Recovery Plan was developed in February 2023 and formally adopted by Council on Tuesday 21 February 2023. The aim of the plan is to return the community to a normal state of functioning. It is not known how long this will take so the plan is a living document which is to be reviewed and amended on an as-needs basis until the aims and objectives have been satisfactorily met.

The Pyrenees Flood Recovery Plan focuses on six key recovery areas:

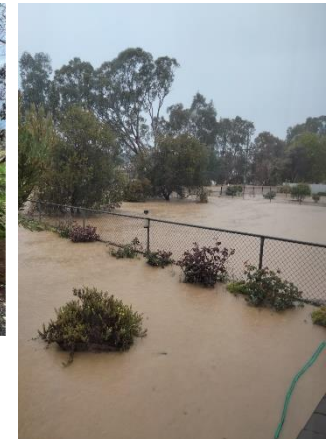
1. Recovery Coordination and Business Continuity
2. People/Social/Community Wellbeing
3. Infrastructure/Built Environment
4. Economic/Business Environment
5. Agriculture Environment
6. Natural Environment

This document provides a summary of the review of flood recovery activities undertaken by Council during the period October 2022 to end of April 2023.

A full copy of the Flood Recovery Plan is available for viewing on the Council's website: <https://www.pyrenees.vic.gov.au/Emergencies/Flood-Recovery>

## KEY OUTCOMES OF THE PYRENEES FLOOD RECOVERY PLAN TO 31<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 2023

- Prompt establishment of internal Flood Recovery Committee to enable an integrated and coordinated approach to the recovery process.
- Advocacy to higher levels of government for timely and appropriate financial assistance and support to impacted residents and communities.
- Establishment and staffing of Recovery Centres and providing outreach programs and services to outlying residents.
- Forming partnerships with community service groups such as Rotary, BlazeAid and LandMate to coordinate direct assistance to households in need.
- Partnering with Windermere Services to provide outreach and follow up of referrals for further assistance.
- Partnering with Brimbank Shire Council to conduct Secondary Impact Assessments.
- Development and distribution of a monthly Flood Recovery newsletter.
- Support community groups/committees to apply for funding to help restore and rebuild community infrastructure.
- Free flood rubbish disposal service for affected residents.
- Coordination of agencies to ensure delivery of assistance to local residents in a timely and appropriate manner.
- Successful advocacy for additional resources to support the flood recovery process including the employment of a Flood Recovery team.
- Advocacy to extend the closing date of grants.
- Works commenced to restore almost \$10 million worth of damage to Council's road network.



Captions (L to R): Natte Yallock Rec Res, Western Hwy in Beaufort, Aerial of Avoca, Emery Track in Glenpatrick, properties in Lexton

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS MOVING FORWARD

- ⇒ Future flooding events and adaptation to climate change.
- ⇒ Returning agriculture to production.
- ⇒ Business viability.
- ⇒ Income support for primary producers and business owners, or other assistance to assist while businesses recover.
- ⇒ Ongoing support for community groups and organisations.
- ⇒ Burnout of volunteers in the restoration process and ways to increase volunteerism.
- ⇒ Development of more complex mental health issues as time goes on and reality hits.
- ⇒ Increased risk of family breakdown due to pressures involved in the restoration process.
- ⇒ Uncertainty created by government policy and the feeling of lack of control over determining one's own future.
- ⇒ Loss of population if people move away from the area and the resulting flow on affects to the viability of the shire, particularly small rural communities, should this occur.
- ⇒ Creation of economic opportunities, jobs and agricultural diversity.
- ⇒ Attracting tourism dollars to the area.
- ⇒ Maintaining the viability and sustainability of towns and small communities into the future.
- ⇒ Monitoring resource requirements over time and advocating for additional resources if needed, or if the recovery process is likely to extend past December 2023.
- ⇒ Residents limited understanding or complacency regarding the flood risk in the Pyrenees.

## FLOOD RECOVERY ACTION PLAN - SUMMARY

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**KEY RECOVERY AREA 1 – RECOVERY COORDINATION AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY**

No.	Action	Tasks	Timeframe	Progress			Status Update
				Complete	Ongoing	Not Commenced	
1	Implement organisational structure for 'Normal' and 'Recovery' function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Divide the Council structure into 'Normal Business' and 'Recovery Team'</li> </ul>	January 2023				Organisational structure is complete and in place. The structure is available in the Flood Recovery Plan.
2	Activate and support the Pyrenees Flood Recovery Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish the Flood Recovery Team</li> <li>Identify location for the Team</li> <li>Promote and support services available through the Team</li> <li>Monitor ongoing needs</li> </ul>	January 2023				The Flood Recovery Team was established in January 2023. This Team oversees the longer-term recovery with support through Council's Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM) and Municipal Emergency Management Officer (MEMO). The Team has been promoted widely through word of mouth, local media, noticeboard, Council's website and through the Flood Recovery Newsletter. Needs of the Team are monitored on an ongoing basis.
3	Resource a recovery team from existing and new staff, agencies and consultants and back fill 'normal business' structures as required.  Seek government support for additional resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employ a Flood Recovery Coordinator to lead the recovery</li> <li>Employ a Community Recovery Officer</li> <li>Employ a Flood Recovery Admin Support Officer</li> <li>Contract a consultant to coordinate the reinstatement of infrastructure</li> </ul>	December 2022				A Community Recovery Officer, Flood Recovery Coordinator, Admin Officer and Infrastructure Officer have been employed.
4	Activate and support the Municipal Flood Coordination Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Municipal Emergency Management Plan for committee structure.</li> <li>Invite potential members to meetings.</li> <li>Review Terms of Reference.</li> <li>Identify and discuss resource and recovery issues.</li> <li>Provide feedback to Council and Government agencies.</li> </ul>	February 2023				Council established a Flood Recovery Committee soon after the first flood event in October with Council staff and other recovery organisations. This committee continues to meet fortnightly and includes representatives from Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV) and Windermere Services. An Expression of Interest (EOI) was sent out in March 2023 for community members to join with only one response. Contact with identified community representatives has been made to plan and deliver recovery and resilience initiatives that best suits each community.

No.	Action	Tasks	Timeframe	Progress			Status Update
				Complete	Ongoing	Not Commenced	
5	Develop a Pyrenees Shire Flood Recovery Plan focusing on the areas of coordination, social, built, economy, agriculture and natural environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document incident background and recovery activities to date.</li> <li>Provide status reports every six months to inform the community and Council.</li> <li>Incorporate feedback from sub-committees into the action plan, if required.</li> </ul>	February 2023				Council's Flood Recovery Plan was adopted by Council Tuesday 21 February 2023. It is a living document which can be amended to suit the needs to the community. This plan is specific to the Oct/Nov 2022 flood events and doesn't replace Council's Flood Plan. The Flood Recovery Plan is available on Council's website. This Summary of Review document provides an update on the actions identified in the Plan and will be available on Council's website.
6	Identify and prioritise areas in Pyrenees Shire requiring assistance through obtaining and collating data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use Council's GIS system to map impacted areas.</li> <li>Use Crisisworks to collate the needs of the community for recovery coordination.</li> <li>Seek data from service providers to assist in identifying recovery needs of the community.</li> </ul>	November 2022 and ongoing				Crisisworks (database) is used to map and manage the needs of individual community members through manual data capture. The Flood Recovery Team is working with Windermere Services to case manage support for residents. Council's GIS system is used to map asset and infrastructure repairs. A diagram of the extent of damage is available in the Flood Recovery Plan.
7	Provide empathetic and relevant recovery information to the Pyrenees community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement a communications strategy.</li> <li>Collate contact information for accessing services.</li> <li>Develop a Pyrenees Flood Recovery Newsletter and circulate widely on an as needs basis.</li> <li>Develop a Flood Recovery page on Council's website.</li> <li>Attend community meetings to provide updates.</li> <li>Report to Council</li> </ul>	November 2022 and ongoing				Communication has been ongoing since the start of the flood events with regular updates provided to the community on information such as access to support and road closures. Regular updates are included in the weekly noticeboard which appears in the Pyrenees Advocate. A flood recovery newsletter has been developed which includes contact information for accessing support services, events, news stories etc., and is distributed monthly by email and in hard copy (resource centres, stores). A flood recovery page has been developed on Council's website.
8	Establish funding sources for various stages for flood/storm recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek funding arrangements available for community and Council.</li> </ul>	Ongoing				Funding has been secured through various government departments for immediate and ongoing flood recovery needs such as staff, infrastructure repairs, and recovery/resilience initiatives. More funding will

No.	Action	Tasks	Timeframe	Progress			Status Update
				Complete	Ongoing	Not Commenced	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek interim payments for asset repair covered under Council's insurance policy.</li> </ul>					be sought for further recovery initiatives identified by communities. Some community facilities are covered under Council's insurance policy and work underway to repair those facilities like the Avoca Recreation Reserve and Men's Shed.
9	Develop financial structure based on recovery / response and funding sources	Create new program for the events, with a list of cost centres for specific projects and funding sources	November 2022				The flood event has been registered with the State Government and cost centres established for funding sources. This will be monitored for the length of the recovery process.
10	Implement physiological support service for staff involved and/or affected by the emergency.	Implement support services for teams and individuals.	November 2022 and ongoing				Council's Employee Assistance Program is available to support staff. Check in with staff involved and/or affected by the emergency occurs on a regular basis.
11	Carry out debriefs allowing staff to reflect, celebrate and inform future events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate engaging a consultant to facilitate the debrief process.</li> <li>Invite all staff to provide input into the debrief, should they choose to.</li> <li>Ensure all staff have access to debrief documents.</li> </ul>	June 2023				Debriefs are currently being organised and are expected to be held in the coming months.
12	Implement an internal communication process with staff (needs to be regular and detailed to address staff morale, customer service and consistent messaging.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Circulating the flood/storm recovery newsletter</li> <li>Report to Council on a quarterly basis.</li> </ul>	October 2022 and ongoing				Council's Flood Recovery Newsletter is distributed to the community monthly, and staff are included in the distribution. Reports have been presented to Council 15 November 2022 and 21 February 2023.



## KEY RECOVERY AREA 2 – PEOPLE / SOCIAL / COMMUNITY WELLBEING

No.	Action	Tasks	Timeframe	Progress			Status Update
				Complete	Ongoing	Not Commenced	
13	Ensure community flood recovery is community-led with support from Council and agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with affected communities to identify their medium and long term needs.</li> <li>Identify and engage with existing community groups.</li> <li>Improve communication by ensuring timely, accurate and localised information sharing</li> <li>Identify emerging social issues for incorporating into medium and long term recovery plans.</li> <li>Establish a process for reporting on insights from community activities, meetings or events.</li> <li>Continually review and assess planned recovery activities and adjust as required.</li> </ul>	Life of the recovery plan and ongoing				Discussions have commenced with community representatives to start planning and delivering recovery/resilience initiatives. Funding has now been secured for costs associated with capacity-building initiatives and running events.
14	Material Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure residents have access to material needs such as food, clothing, furniture</li> </ul>	Life of the recovery plan and ongoing				Support is provided through Salvation Army, opportunity shops and food banks for food, clothing and furniture. Windermere Services has been linking donations with recipients through GIVIT.
15	Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop innovative approaches to supporting mental health across the municipality.</li> <li>Provide counselling services to residents as required.</li> <li>Provide a case support service to households/individuals.</li> </ul>	Life of the recovery plan and ongoing				<p>The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) is the lead agency for the provision of mental health services to the community. Windermere Services has been and continue to refer residents for services.</p> <p>David Younger, a specialist in disaster management, and Cathy Bunter from AgVic spoke about personal and community recovery including looking after animals at community sessions in Avoca (26 April) and Lexton (10 May) and will be in Beaufort on 8</p>

No.	Action	Tasks	Timeframe	Progress			Status Update
				Complete	Ongoing	Not Commenced	
							<p>June (funded by DFFH).</p> <p>Council will continue to work closely with organisations on community events and other initiatives to improve mental health outcomes over the coming months.</p>
16	Clean-up Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively promote clean-up services available to flood affected residents</li> <li>Coordinate groups wishing to assist with local clean-up.</li> </ul>	Life of the recovery plan and ongoing				<p>Local clean-up services have been provided by service organisations such as Rotary. Volunteers have helped to clean up community assets such as the Chinese Garden in Avoca. Council has provided assistance by offering a free flood affected rubbish disposal service. Early funding has been provided to Council to assist with the immediate clean-up activities at places such as the Avoca Golf Course, Toll Bar Park in Lexton and recreation reserves.</p>
17	Donations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Recovery Officer to match donators with specific people in need in consultation with agencies and service organisations.</li> <li>Consider organisations such as GIVIT to coordinate donations.</li> </ul>	Life of the recovery plan and ongoing				<p>Windermere Services has been matching donors with specific need through the GIVIT organisation.</p>
18	Outreach/Social Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an outreach program to meet the needs of residents.</li> <li>Create an environment where people feel comfortable asking for help.</li> <li>Encourage kitchen table visits by counsellors and case support workers.</li> </ul>	Life of the recovery plan and ongoing				<p>Outreach services were undertaken by the Municipal Recovery Manager in Natte Yallock on 27<sup>th</sup> Oct, 3<sup>rd</sup> &amp; 10<sup>th</sup> Nov, and in Lexton on 16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Nov 2022. The Flood Recovery Officer, Windermere Services and DFFH have been visiting residents across the municipality to provide outreach services such as filling out grant applications and referrals for support services. The Avoca and Beaufort Resource Centres were used as temporary recovery centres until the Flood Recovery Team was established.</p>
19	Referrals for Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify agencies / organisations who provide support and compile contact</li> </ul>	Life of the recovery plan and				<p>Referrals for further assistance to other agencies are being managed by Windermere Services and the Flood Recovery Team.</p>

No.	Action	Tasks	Timeframe	Progress			Status Update
				Complete	Ongoing	Not Commenced	
		<p>details in a fact sheet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with those impacted to determine the need and offer referral to services.</li> </ul>	ongoing				
20	Housing/Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor housing needs</li> <li>Refer for building inspections</li> </ul>	Life of the recovery plan and ongoing				<p>Emergency accommodation was organised for residents who either couldn't return home due to closed roads or homes were inundated when the flooding occurred. In the main, residents have made their own arrangements if they have been unable to live in their home. DFFH is the lead agency for housing and is available to provide ongoing support.</p> <p>Support was provided by the Victorian Government to Council to help coordinate and conduct Secondary Impact Assessments (SIA). SIAs were completed on 8 residences and 3 facilities across the municipality by specialists such as building inspectors, electricians and structural engineers to give an indication of what works are required to rebuild/restore.</p>
21	Facilitate community-led activities, events and projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with affected communities to identify their medium and long term aspirations and issues.</li> <li>Identify community-based, activities, events and projects</li> <li>Put in place a program of community events and programs.</li> <li>Seek funding opportunities for medium to longer term activities and events.</li> </ul>	Life of the recovery plan and ongoing				<p>Work has commenced with community representatives on supporting community-led activities and events. Some events will be held in partnership with other organisations such as AgVic and Grampians Health. Funding is being sought to assist with community-led activities.</p>

## KEY RECOVERY AREA 3: INFRASTRUCTURE / BUILT ENVIRONMENT

No.	Action	Tasks	Timeframe	Progress			Status Update
				Complete	Ongoing	Not Commenced	
23	Determine the tasks required to reinstate the infrastructure assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish an internal Council infrastructure working group to repair Council owned infrastructure.</li> <li>Invite members of the community or other agencies on an as needs basis.</li> <li>The working group to coordinate works in conjunction with Council's capital works program.</li> </ul>	February 2023				A working group meets to coordinate repair to Council owned infrastructure. The group discusses and plans coordinating flood recovery works with Council's capital works program.
24	Restore roads and bridges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct road/bridge/culvert inspections and develop a priority matrix.</li> <li>Undertake emergency repairs.</li> <li>Establish an action plan for road and bridge rehabilitation.</li> <li>Advocate for funding to rehabilitate road network and reconstruct damaged bridges.</li> <li>Provide up to date information to the community.</li> <li>Provide feedback to the Flood Recovery Committee.</li> </ul>	December 2023				A damage assessment of roads, bridges, culverts and floodways was completed in October/November 2022 and a priority matrix has been developed for the \$10M worth of repairs. The highest priority is for payment repairs on sealed roads as they are higher trafficked roads. Next is to repair rutting on road shoulders and next is or more complex payment and bridge repairs. Repairs have commenced and updates will be provided to the community as they progress. Emergency repairs were undertaken soon after the flooding events to make the roads safe enough to re-open. Funding for the repair of infrastructure has been approved through the Commonwealth Government's Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.
25	Restore community infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess damage to community infrastructure such as public halls, toilets, playgrounds and reserves and recommend works required.</li> <li>Identify responsible authority for repairs and provide support to re-establish the facilities.</li> </ul>	December 2023				An assessment of community infrastructure was conducted to determine the extent of damage and repair works required. Funding has been secured to help restore the infrastructure and more funding will be sought, if required. Repairs are underway or set to commence at many of the sites. The Flood Recovery Team has been working with groups to help restore the community infrastructure.

No.	Action	Tasks	Timeframe	Progress			Status Update
				Complete	Ongoing	Not Commenced	
26	Restore fencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quantify fencing losses and identify opportunities for help to restore fences.</li> </ul>	Ongoing				BlazeAid and Landmate Teams have been busy with fence repairs for primary producers. BlazeAid has now completed their works program in the Pyrenees. The team cleared 46km of fencing and build 21km of new fencing for 42 residents. The crew contributed to 900 volunteer working days. Landmate Teams continue to assist with fencing repairs. CMAs manage fencing repairs on riparian land.

## KEY RECOVERY AREA 4: ECONOMIC / BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

No.	Action	Tasks	Timeframe	Progress			Status Update
				Complete	Ongoing	Not Commenced	
27	Provide small business support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visit local businesses to ensure support is provided.</li> </ul>	Life of the recovery plan and ongoing				<p>Council's Economic Development &amp; Tourism staff visited local businesses after the floods to provide support such as applying for recovery grants. This support is ongoing. Some business support activities held or being held are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small Business Victoria's small business bus visited Beaufort on 1st May and Avoca on 4<sup>th</sup> May.</li> <li>Under the business recovery program, networking / business events will be held in the coming months.</li> <li>A business community wellbeing program is being planned.</li> </ul> <p>The State Government provided funding under the Small Business Immediate Flood Relief Program and quite a number of businesses and sporting groups received funding.</p>
28	Attract visitors to the municipality to stimulate the local economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a marketing campaign to bring visitors to the municipality.</li> </ul>	Life of the recovery plan and ongoing				<p>Tourism videos are currently being produced to attract visitors to the region. Pyrenees is part of newly formed Tourism MidWest Victoria and work has begun to promote visitors to the region.</p>
29	Implement appropriate education/skill training programs which assist business owners to make critical decisions and develop ongoing sustainability plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pursue programs which provide assistance to businesses.</li> </ul>	Life of the recovery plan and ongoing				<p>Networking events for business organisations area scheduled for June/Aug 2023.</p>
30	Ensure that major events continue to be held in the Pyrenees municipality and are well supported.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support community groups to get events back up and running.</li> </ul>	Life of the recovery plan and ongoing				<p>Events are being held again in the municipality following a cancellation of a number of events due to the floods. Council's tourism team has been busy organising and/or providing support to run events such as the Easter Hop campaign and seasonal campaigns such as Pyrenees Unearthed and Play in the Pyrenees.</p>

## KEY RECOVERY AREA 5: AGRICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

No.	Action	Tasks	Timeframe	Progress			Status Update
				Complete	Ongoing	Not Commenced	
31	Financial and mental health support is provided for primary producers to recover from the floods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Referrals are made to health services.</li> <li>Coordinate financial counselling services for primary producers.</li> </ul>	Life of the recovery plan and ongoing				Rural Finance has funding available for primary producers under the Primary Producer Recovery Grant and also the Rural Landholder Grant. These grants are open until 13 July. Council's Flood Recovery Officer has been visiting primary producers to provide support with grant applications. Referrals to the Rural Financial Counselling Service is managed by Windermere Services and the Flood Recovery Team.
32	Implement appropriate education/skill training programs which assist farmers to make critical decisions and develop ongoing sustainability plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek opportunities under the Resilient Farmer Project.</li> <li>Pursue programs which provide assistance to farming individuals, couples or families</li> </ul>	Life of the recovery plan and ongoing				Both the National Centre for Farmer Health and Agriculture Victoria offer a range of programs to help primary producers with not only the recovery process but with help running a farming business. Information on both organisations is regularly promoted in the Flood Recovery Newsletter and on Council's website.
33	Delivery of appropriate fodder for flood affected farmers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor fodder needs.</li> <li>A process is put into place for the coordination of fodder donations and delivery, if required.</li> </ul>	Life of the recovery plan and ongoing				Referrals for fodder assistance is being managed by Windermere Services and the Flood Recovery Team.

KEY RECOVERY AREA 6: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

No.	Action	Tasks	Timeframe	Progress			Status Update
				Complete	Ongoing	Not Commenced	
34	Enable rehabilitation of land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate options for programs and funding to meet land rehabilitation needs in the future such as re-vegetation projects and rehabilitation of waterways.</li> </ul>	Life of the recovery plan and ongoing				Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) that manage land and water resources in the Pyrenees Shire have been working on repairing riparian fencing, debris removal, erosion control and damage to riverbanks following the floods. Funding is available through CMAs for this type of work on private property.
35	Minimise risk of mosquito borne diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce environments conducive to mosquito breeding</li> <li>Implement control strategies where appropriate.</li> </ul>	Ongoing				Advice has been provided to residents, by the Environmental Health Officer, about ways to prevent mosquitos breeding such as removing stagnant water to prevent mosquito borne disease.
36	Ensure residents have access to free disposal of flood affected waste.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinate a flood waste disposal service which meets the needs of the community.</li> </ul>	October 2022 and ongoing				A free flood rubbish disposal service has been made available to affected residents. A range of options have been provided including skip bins, truck and loader, public skips, and free disposal at transfer stations. This service has been well received by residents.
37	Reduce environmental and public health risks associated with flood affected septic tank systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide advice to residents to minimise risks and to reinstate septic tanks.</li> <li>Inspect septic tanks at flood affected community facilities and make recommendations for reinstatement.</li> <li>Inspect flood affected domestic septic tank units, where required.</li> </ul>	October 2022 and ongoing				Proactive information and advice to affected residents has been provided by Council’s Environmental Health Officers and through information sheets and the Flood Recovery Newsletter. Inspections of septic tanks at flood affected homes and community facilities were undertaken throughout October 2022 to February 2023 and recommendations for repair works have been implemented.