

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 18 December 2020

Communities of Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley urged to ‘be aware and prepare’ for floods

Know your flood risk, find out about key evacuation routes and prepare your ‘get ready to go’ kit now – That’s the message from NSW State Emergency Service (NSW SES) and Resilience NSW, who have joined forces to ensure communities in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley are ready for floods.

NSW SES Commissioner Carlene York said current conditions within the region mean communities face an increased chance of flooding.

“Storm season is underway, and the Bureau of Meteorology has declared a La Niña, which means we will have a wetter than usual summer,” Commissioner York said.

“We also have near-full dams and wetter catchments in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley, which means the region is at a very high risk of experiencing floods.

“The area has flooded before and will flood again. We need people to start thinking that it is not a case of ‘if’, but ‘when’ floods will happen,” Commissioner York said.

With over 130,000 people living or working in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley, as well as those who plan to travel through the area over the summer break, communities are being urged to know their local risk and have a plan in place.

Commissioner York said that in the face of this very serious risk, planning ahead can make all the difference.

“In the event of a flood, evacuation orders may be issued at short notice. Other factors such as power outages may impact communication channels,” Commissioner York said.

“That’s why it’s so important to know your flood risk, find out about key evacuation routes and prepare your ‘get ready to go’ kit now.

“We want people to be informed and empowered now, instead of waiting for directions in the event of an emergency.

“As part of our Flood Strategy for the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley, advertising is underway to remind people to know their flood risk, and our website has a lot of useful and practical information specially created for valley residents.

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“Included among the resources are tips on how to keep updated about weather and flood warnings, as well as crucial preparedness advice – such as how to find your key evacuation routes and creating a ‘get ready to go’ kit,” she said.

Resilience NSW Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons said the risk of flood this season is very real for people in the Hawkesbury Nepean Valley.

“NSW emergency services do an incredible job of keeping individuals and communities safe, but they can only do so much. Being aware and prepared is everyone’s responsibility, whether you’re at home, at work or away on holidays,” Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

“Due to the increased risk of flooding in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley over the summer season, Resilience NSW has employed a dedicated officer to help Blacktown, Central Coast, Hawkesbury, Hornsby, Liverpool, Penrith, The Hills and Wollondilly councils and local communities to focus on preparedness and resilience.”

For more information about the risks of floods in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley, visit www.myfloodrisk.nsw.gov.au

For more information about the Flood Strategy for the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley, visit www.insw.com/flood-strategy

If you need emergency assistance in a storm or flood, call NSW SES on 132 500. If the situation is life-threatening, call Triple Zero immediately.

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