



19 February 2025

Ms Vicki Ward
Minister for Emergency Services
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MELBOURNE VIC 3000
minister.ward@dffh.vic.gov.au

Dear Minister

Follow Up Request for Technical and Financial Support Following the McCrae Landslide

I am disappointed that I have not received an acknowledgement or reply to the letter I wrote to you a month ago on behalf of Mornington Peninsula Shire (Shire). I requested urgent technical expertise, including geotechnical engineering, survey costs, and funding from the Victorian Government, to help address the significant and complex challenges following the landslide in McCrae on 14 January 2025.

Since I wrote to you, the Shire has managed considerable disruption to our community, which requires extensive investigation and ongoing recovery efforts. The landslide's immediate impacts included the closure of Point Nepean Road, the evacuation of 19 homes, the establishment of a Community Relief Centre, and regular communication with the community.

On Friday 14 February, residents from eight properties were able to safely return home—a significant step forward. However, conditions and risk factors vary across the exclusion zone, and the Municipal Building Surveyor from the Shire is working to further understand and assess conditions at the remaining 11 properties.

On 10 February 2025, the Transition to Recovery agreement was signed by the Shire, VICSES and Victoria Police. Internal senior staffing resources have been redirected to this effort over the next six months, providing consistent leadership to ensure that recovery progresses as swiftly and effectively as possible.

Extensive investigations, including trace dye testing, CCTV of our stormwater drainage network, surface water testing, aerial surveys, and monitoring and testing of ground movement, have progressed as the Shire works to understand the cause of the landslide.

Contact the Mornington Peninsula Shire

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The Shire remains focused on its residents' needs. Ensuring residents can return home safely is crucial, so the Shire is developing a carefully managed plan to provide brief home access, allowing residents to retrieve essential items and, ultimately, a phased return for additional residents where possible. Power has now also been returned to most properties.

The Shire has held several community meetings to inform residents and allow them to ask questions. We communicate daily with all those affected, and residents have direct contact with the Council. We have also written directly to the surrounding community and set up a community recovery committee with community representatives. Our website is regularly updated to keep the broader community informed.

We have moved into a critical phase of investigation and have received permission from most residents to install specialist monitoring equipment at their properties. This includes drilling boreholes for water testing and installing a Global Navigation Satellite System, tilt sensors, and survey prisms to provide ongoing stability monitoring and greater certainty of safety and risk factors across the entire area. This data will provide crucial insights into the landslide and guide the next steps.

Regrettably, despite the Shire's efforts to secure the area through fencing, installing CCTV cameras with licence plate recognition, warning signs, and hiring a private security company for 24/7 patrols, several homes in the exclusion zone were broken into, and items were stolen. Council swiftly engaged its contractors to undertake private works at our cost to assist residents in securing their homes by boarding up broken doors and windows. We have installed additional CCTV cameras across the site and are assisting Victoria Police with their investigations.

The Shire is committed to effectively managing the impacts of landslides, but it cannot do it alone. The council is prepared to work with the Victorian Government to respond to this event collaboratively in the interests of residents and will also engage with the Board of Inquiry announced on 4 February.

I would appreciate a discussion with you about the technical and financial resources the Victorian Government can provide the Shire to help ensure that our displaced families, who remain in limbo, can return to their homes as quickly and safely as possible. Support from the Victorian Government will be vital to ensure a coordinated and comprehensive recovery process.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this urgent matter.

Yours sincerely

I/S

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Cc:

Hon. Jacinta Allan MP, Premier of Victoria
Hon. Nick Staikos MP, Minister for Local Government
Hon. Gayle Tierney MP, Minister for Water
Tom McIntosh, Member for Eastern Victoria
Brad Battin MP, Leader of the Opposition
Sam Groth MP, Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Member for Nepean
Kelly Grigsby, CEO, Municipal Association of Victoria