

McCrae Landslide Community Meeting

Summary

22 January 2025

11am – 12.15am

Dromana Community Hall

This meeting was to organised for the impacted residents of the McCrae landslide. This was an opportunity for the Mornington Peninsula Shire and partner agencies to provide updates and allow the residents to ask questions.

Attendees

Representatives from Mornington Peninsula Shire, Southeast Water, Department of Transport and Planning, Emergency Management Victoria

VCC EM (Victorian Council of Churches – Emergency Ministry) and Red Cross here to provide psychological support.

Residents.

Agenda

Following a brief welcome from Mayor – **Anthony Marsh**, the following representatives from Mornington Peninsula Shire, Southeast Water, Department of Transport and Planning provided updates:

Dale Gilliatte, Municipal Emergency Manager (Mornington Peninsula Shire)

Tim Lloyd, South East Water (SEW)

David Smith, Department Planning and Transport

Andrew Brick, Municipal Recovery Manager (Mornington Peninsula Shire)

Following these brief updates, Dale facilitated a Q and A session with the residents.

Summary of questions

Q. Can we have a list of the points of contact, and will they be advertised more widely? (See last page)

A. We have email addresses of all evacuated properties but not wider residents. We can reach out to the wider community.

Q. Local paper? (This will be included in comms plan)

A. Yes, will look at that. Dedicated email and SE Water contact as well.

Q. Radar – will it be individual properties?

Will be in one location covering the whole site, providing day-to-day monitoring of changes in site.

Q. Owns property on the edge of the exclusion zone, built on clay – everything is being concentrated on the site, but edges are being missed.

A. Everything we are doing is based on expert geotechnical advice. Radar will cover whole area, and if any extra steps are required, they will be employed.

Q. How long will this take?

A. We don't know yet. Supports are available for affected residents.

Q. Why aren't the SES here?

A. Cannot speak on behalf of the SES. They were invited and were coming but advised this morning that they weren't coming.

Q. Are SES still in charge or should it be the Shire?

A. SES still in charge of the site, and control hasn't yet been signed over to Council (there is a formal process). Discussion about this is underway/ongoing.

Q What are the specific conditions that need to be met to allow us back into our properties? Support rational, risk-based assessment but not excess conservatism. These are primary residents for many people here so need to know when they can return.

A. Council is relying completely on geotechnical advice and assessment.

Orders are in place because there is an immediate risk to life and property. Until there isn't that risk, the properties will remain evacuated.

Q. At a future meeting, would like to know what the criteria are. Does it relate to rate of movement, sediment, etc.? Won't support super conservative principles that are not backed by science and engineering.

A. we will communicate that to residents once we know.

Q. It's a week since this event, three geo-tech firms, lots of talk of the future, what is the result of investigations up until now, no report?

A. Report hasn't been concluded, takes time. Collected drone, geotech data, installing radars and waiting on LiDAR data. As soon as we have the report, we will be acting on it.

Q. Any movement since last week?

A. No information that there has been further slippage.

Q. In house when slip happened. Nine days prior there was an initial slip. Required daily monitoring which occurred. Based on what then happened, why weren't residents asked to evacuate sooner?

A. We will take that on board and this will be reviewed.

Q. Re the water on Charlesworth and Coburn Ave – want to know where it's coming from and going to? (since 26 November). What's the process to find out?

- A. Ongoing investigation, road closed.
- Our geotech engineers along with other authorities are investigating sources to determine cause but no final conclusion. Geotech will provide advice.

Q. How secure are the houses – re looting?

A. Council planning to have activated security cameras this afternoon, including licence plate recognition cameras, along with signage to draw attention to the cameras. And Police.

Q. Given there are quite a few geotechs, are there any hydrogeologists involved? Would be good to hear their assessment as well.

A. Consultants we're using are part of a much a large organisation. They have all types of experts they can call on, including hydrogeologists.

Q. Is there still water running from the site?

A. Can't answer right now but can find out quickly, Council have someone on site at present.

Q. What's happening to secure the area, even temporarily?

A To stabilise it we need to know what's going on. Work is happening on site every day.

A water was continuing to flow down the site as of yesterday – same volume since most recent major landslide – 10-15L/minute.

Q. Is there anything that should be happening immediately to capture and control the water? Head scarp is continuing to move and putting another property at significant risk.

Q. Why can't we get information directly from the geotech?

A. The geotechs will provide reports. We haven't seen a report yet – there are several geotechs working on this.

Q. Will Council be sharing the interim report?

A. Will review the report and take the necessary action. Will commit to sharing the information that community needs from that report.

Q. What you're saying to us is "trust you". Concerns re filtering information.

A. our goal is to assist you to get back into your homes.

Q. Have a fundamental problem. Seems like everyone is going out of their way to say it's not our fault. Still hiding information from a long time ago. Until we have an open discussion we're not going to get to a resolution. All the energy so far is going into avoiding responsibility. Need to have a community discussion about it. Legal hiding is BS – need to work as a community and solve the problem.

A. want to make it clear- we are not trying to hide anything. What we are doing is make sure we have the right expert and the right people in the room to get a report together, to get the right information. We want to make sure we get the right information to the people who need it. It's a process, and acknowledge it is a very difficult time.

Q. Since 2022 every time we try to talk to Council, they say we can't talk to you.

A. acknowledge and take what you're saying. Given that there are legal proceedings in play we can't talk to that case. We will commit today to getting the information from the reports to you in a timely manner, to let people know if it's safe to return.

Q. Was the previous slip, and the legal proceedings, is that a reason that the evacuation order wasn't given to us? First slip narrowly missed wife and daughter. Freak of an incident that someone didn't die the day the house was destroyed. Beggars belief why people still had access to that house.

A. taking question on notice and will get back.

Q. More than happy for Council to settle the legal situation if they just come and talk to us rather than hiding behind the courts. You (Council) work for us.

Q. What we're all frustrated about is there's a lot of looking and talking and not a lot of doing.

Evicted from his home at 10.30pm on Friday night. Why wasn't SES there? What precipitated the change in events/circumstances that led to him being evacuated. What happened on that night is a clear indication of actions being taken without disclosure. Understood Council took it upon themselves under the building code to evacuate my property. Not given an explanation about why. Why are these decisions being made, how long will it take, what actions are being taken?

Q. Can't complain about the people evicting them at 11pm Friday but they couldn't speak to why they were being evicted. SES were present. My view is that Council will be so cautious about letting people back in. It should be property owners' decision to enter property, not some mindless bureaucrat. We take our own risk.

A. Firstly, it was out of concern for welfare that emergency orders were served. Understand the concern as to the circumstances and time, however we were advised that there was a risk to life. The reason it was at that time is because we are receiving information every hour, every day. Expert advice from geotechnical engineer and building surveyor.

Q. Where is SES, given the choice to evacuate was contrary to SES?

A. whether or not SES have geotechnical advice to the contrary is a question for them.

Q. What right does the Shire have (as the non-controlling body) to evict people from their home? Didn't have the dignity to explain this – why?

All information was advice from geotech engineer and building surveyor. Based on water present, slope, observable conditions that were similar enough in characteristics, to other sites of concern- hence the reason to evacuate. As to who is in charge, SES took control of the exclusion zone. Council has powers under the Building Act that we must exercise when there is an immediate risk to life, and we exercised those powers. That included obligations for properties outside of the exclusion zone the SES had set up. We cannot understand the situation you are in, and understand the disruption, but there is a very clear response- where there is a risk to life we need to act. The additional 5 properties have been added to the exclusion zone by the SES.

Q. Two questions: are there any minutes being taken that will be shared? Will people be expected to pay rates?

A. Notes are being taken.

A. SEW customers will not be seeing any charges on their next water bill, or future water bills, while they are unable to occupy their homes.

A. If the house is unoccupiable, the rates portion is waived.

Q. Should that not have applied since the 2022 slip for people who were evacuated then? They've been paying rates since then.

A. Will look into residents evacuated in 2022.

Q. Is there a physical presence for security?

A. No. Can liaise with VicPol to do drive-by.

Q. Evidence of tampering with plastic ties

A. Will take details after the meeting.

Q. Courtyard accessed?

Q. Need power restored as quickly as possible to allow security cameras to operate. Also, sump pumps.

A. Understand- will relay that to the SES.

Q. SEW had excavators out, dug up rd. and restored. Haven't seen anything from Council. Surely there would have been a redirection of the water runoff?

A. Council have been doing the works at Charlesworth and Coburn, with SEW involved. CCTV monitoring that drainage is still going the right way. Visual inspection is showing that it is going in the right direction. Please provide this information/concerns to Council so we can act on it.

Q. to DTP – What's been observed is that there is no traffic management. People's access up to and around the exclusion zone. Should be monitoring. Observed SES and SEW in the area – also saw illegal camper at Pt Nepean Rd. Watched a vehicle enter, unload kids and beach equipment – no adherence to traffic management. Not confident about security, who's going to do anything about it?

Q. Biggest weekend of the year coming up. Traffic on Coburn Ave detour – being used as a rat run. Should go along the freeway. Need a better traffic management system before this weekend.

A. we will be working with DTP to strengthen traffic control over the weekend. Possibility of manning different entrances, requesting IDs, etc. (Residents expressed support of these options).

Q. What resources do you have on the ground re geotech? Has it increased since last week? Is there the scope and funds in place? (concern following discussion with the geotech on site)

A. geotech expert does have a scope of works and can draw in the experts needed to complete report with recommendations.

A. geotech has best possible people involved. LiDAR being used, expertise from all over the country.

A. Council is throwing everything at it, resourcing as best we can.

Q. Is Melbourne Water involved at all?

A. haven't engaged them (Council).

(Note- another resident pointed out that Southern Rural Water is the responsible authority for groundwater)

Q. Traffic Mgmt. – Prospect Hill Rd- no footpaths and cars are taking the sweeping bend too fast. Children, older people walking on road. Something needs to change- needs to be a slow zone, 30km/h. Shouldn't be used. Additional traffic (including trucks, vehicles towing boats) – isn't this adding to the problem?

A. Tricky as Coburn Rd has spring as well so can't use that. We are taking that on notice, and at a minimum, considering reduced speed limit. Note: residents would prefer ID checks/proof of residency as well.

Community support

Drop-in centre is open at Dromana Visitor Centre, 10am – 4pm.

We will send you the email addresses. Please send through observations, and they will be passed on to the geotech.

mccraerecovery@mornpen.vic.gov.au

mbssupport@mornpen.vic.gov.au

Key Contact Information

Mornington Peninsula Shire

The Shire has a dedicated McCrae Landslide community information page on our website which will be updated regularly as new information comes to hand.

www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/mccraelandslide (or search McCrae in the search bar)

For immediate concerns, please call 1300 850 600 or email customerservice@mornpen.vic.gov.au.

- mccraerecovery@mornpen.vic.gov.au - monitored by the Community Resilience and Emergency Management Team and used for enquiries relating to all aspects of recovery.
- mbssupport@mornpen.vic.gov.au - monitored by the Building Survey Team and used for enquiries on the Emergency Order only.

Drop-in centre is open at Dromana Visitor Centre, 10am – 4pm

South East Water

- Bek McIndoe is available to support customers affected by the incident and unable to occupy their homes.
 - Rebecca McIndoe (Bek)
 - Customer
 - Mobile: Personal Information
 - resolutions@sew.com.au