

13 February 2026

Senator the Hon. Murray Watt
Minister for the Environment and Water
GPO Box 228
BRISBANE QLD 4000
By email: senator.watt@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator Watt

Subject: Investment in Flood Resilience and Stormwater Infrastructure in Knox

I am writing to seek your support for increased Federal Government investment in flood mitigation and stormwater infrastructure across the Knox City Council. This request stems from Council's endorsement of its Stormwater Asset Management Plan 2025 - 2035 which will guide continuous improvement in stormwater asset management practices and outcomes.

Knox City Council has budgeted approximately \$14m towards stormwater infrastructure investment over the next four years and has plans for an additional \$3.54 million investment in funding across the next three years to implement asset renewal and maintenance improvements as outlined in its Stormwater Asset Management Plan. However, these investments pale in comparison to the current overall need to achieve targeted network performance, noting that across Knox, 71% of Council's drainage network within road reserves is operating at capacity during a 1 in 5 year flood event occurrence, which emphasizes the lack of latency in Council's system.

Knox is experiencing ever-growing pressure on its drainage networks due to more frequent and severe rainfall events, climate change impacts, and significant housing growth targets. Many of our legacy stormwater assets that were built decades ago are now undersized for current and future conditions, contributing to increased flood prone areas and reduced community resilience.

To address these risks, Knox City Council is advocating for Federal Government funding support to:

- Upgrade ageing and undersized stormwater/drainage infrastructure in known flood affected locations;
- Invest in modern and climate resilient flood mitigation measures, including water sensitive (green) urban design solutions;
- Support climate adaptation works that ensure the network can withstand more intense rainfall events; and

Council officers are committed to working collaboratively with both levels of government, but the scale of investment required exceeds the resources available to local government alone. Strategic, long-term funding is essential to safeguard the community and ensure Knox's infrastructure is resilient to changing climate conditions and future growth.

We respectfully seek your advocacy within your government to prioritise and support increased investment in flood resilience and stormwater infrastructure for Knox. Thank you for your consideration. I would welcome any opportunity to provide further information or discuss project priorities in detail.

A copy of Council's Stormwater Asset Management Plan is available on Council's website at [Stormwater Asset Management Plan | Knox](#).

Should you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact Matt Hanrahan, Manager Strategic Infrastructure on 9298 8137 or via email on matthew.hanrahan@knox.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Cr Paige Kennett
Mayor

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The Hon Kristy McBain MP

Minister for Emergency Management
Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories
Member for Eden-Monaro

Ref No: MC26-007650

Cr Paige Kennett
Mayor
Knox City Council
511 Burwood Highway
WANTIRNA SOUTH VIC 3152

knoxcc@knox.vic.gov.au

Dear Mayor

Thank you for your correspondence of 13 February 2026 to the Minister for the Environment and Water, Senator the Hon Murray Watt, seeking support for increased Australian Government investment in flood mitigation and stormwater infrastructure across the City of Knox. Your correspondence has been referred to me as the matter falls within my portfolio responsibilities.

I commend your proactive approach to safeguarding the community and addressing the challenges posed by increasingly frequent and severe weather events. I would like to acknowledge Knox City Council's intent to make a significant investment in stormwater management and asset renewal, as outlined in your Stormwater Asset Management Plan. These efforts play a vital role in strengthening community resilience and adapting to changing climate conditions.

In support of initiatives that address natural hazards such as floods, I want to draw your attention to the Government's Disaster Ready Fund (DRF). The DRF is our primary national program for disaster risk reduction and resilience.

The DRF operates as a competitive, merit-based grant opportunity, and applicants are required to provide a co-contribution to maximize overall investment. The DRF Guidelines set the broad parameters for the types of project proposals that are eligible for DRF funding.

Round Three prioritised investment in large-scale infrastructure projects that deliver lasting

benefits in resilience and risk reduction across Australia. The guidelines for DRF Round Four, including eligibility criteria and application processes, will soon be available on the National Emergency Management Agency's website at www.nema.gov.au. Applicants must make their own assessment of eligibility against the eligibility criteria set out in the Guidelines in deciding whether to apply.

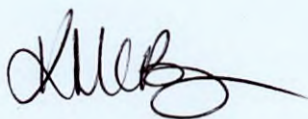
State and Territory lead agencies coordinate project proposals and will make an initial assessment of eligibility and merit, ensuring alignment with disaster resilience priorities. I encourage you to contact the Victorian lead agency, Emergency Management Victoria at drf@emv.vic.gov.au to discuss your proposal.

More broadly, the Government's Housing Support Program has also invested in the critical infrastructure needed to unlock and support new, well-located housing developments across Australia. The \$450 million Community Enabling Infrastructure Stream is funding 31 projects to undertake critical infrastructure headworks, many including stormwater infrastructure, or construct community amenities. A key merit criterion of the Stream was to demonstrate how a project's location and design incorporated resilience measures to protect new housing supply from natural disasters.

There is also the Housing Australia Critical Infrastructure program (formerly known as the National Housing Infrastructure Facility – Critical Infrastructure stream). Through the program, Housing Australia provides concessional loans and/or grants to successful applicants for critical infrastructure to unlock and accelerate new housing supply. Further information can be found at:
www.housingaustralia.gov.au/national-housing-infrastructure-facility-critical-infrastructure-nhif-ci.

Thank you again for your leadership and for bringing these important issues to the Government's attention.

Yours sincerely



Kristy McBain MP

8 / 4 / 2026

cc Senator the Hon Murray Watt, Minister for the Environment and Water