

Item 3.2

Assisting Disaster Recovery Following the Devasting Floods in Nepal and Tibet

File No: S051491

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

It is now over 3 weeks since devastating floods swept through northern Nepal and Tibet changing thousands of lives in a matter of hours. On the morning of 26 August 2026, a section of glacier and bedrock collapsed into the Lhende Khola basin in Tibet, temporarily damming the Trishuli River. This debris barrier failed, unleashing an enormous wave of water, ice, mud and rock which cascaded down the river.

We have all seen images of what followed – the wave crashing into, destroying and washing away the Miteri Bridge (also known as the Nepal-China Friendship Bridge) at Gyirong Port on the Tibet-Nepal border, and people desperately fleeing from the floods soon after. The torrent swept down the river causing severe flash flooding. Bridges and crucial roadways were washed away cutting off entire communities; surface powerhouses were wiped out, crippling Nepal's energy grid; farmlands were inundated with mud, slush and rock and schools and hospitals were damaged and destroyed.

The impact of this devastation continues with thousands lacking reliable access to safe water, healthcare, schools and other essential services. It is estimated that over 84,000 people have been impacted by the floods, including more than 32,000 children. At the time of publishing, over 1,300 people had died, over 6,800 had been injured, and over 5,100 were missing in Nepal. In Tibet, 43 people died and 519 were missing, according to official Chinese Government figures.

Climate change disproportionately impacts the Himalayas

While the exact causes are not yet known, scientists already know that rising global temperatures caused by human activity are destabilising glaciers in the Himalayas, which contain some of the world's tallest slopes. World-renowned Glaciologist, Dr. Twila Moon from the University of Colorado Boulder, is [reported](#) as saying, "there's no question that this event was made more likely because of climate change and that we're seeing more likely other similar glacier hazards occurring".

Scientists have observed that thousands of glaciers are losing ice at unprecedented rates and the permafrost they sit atop is also thawing. As the frozen blend of soil, rocks and organic material warms, the mountains and surrounding ice become less stable which can result in massive landslides, triggering cascading processes that can lead to a massive flood and destruction. Such events are likely to become more common as the world continues to heat up.

The [Guardian](#) reports that the Himalayas, which span across India, China, Nepal and Bhutan, have been warming at a rate nearly 50% faster than the global average. Shisir Khanal, Nepal's Minister for Foreign Affairs has called for a global effort to address climate change and asked for the global community to come together and preserve the Himalayan ecosystem.

Nepal is one of the world's lowest contributors of greenhouse gases, but it faces some of the worst impacts of climate change. It contributes less than 0.1% of global greenhouse gas emissions, while its neighbours India and China are among the world's biggest emitters. Mr Khanal said it was imperative the world's biggest economies stepped up to help Nepal recover and rebuild. A report by the news agency Reuters states Nepali officials estimate that it will cost \$4 billion to \$5 billion, or about a tenth of the country's economy, to rebuild.

Recovery

Urgent priorities for recovery include the provision of emergency shelter, food assistance, household essentials, safe water, sanitation and hygiene support, healthcare and psychosocial assistance.

UNICEF is on the ground in Nepal, working with the Nepali Government to deliver critical supplies and help restore access to essential services for displaced communities. The affected area is difficult to access, and this is made more difficult by extensive infrastructure damage.

UNICEF's immediate focus is to protect the safety and wellbeing of children, while laying the foundation for longer-term recovery: rebuilding essential services and strengthening the resilience of communities to withstand future disasters.

I therefore propose we donate \$25,000 to UNICEF's Nepal Flash Flood Appeal to support this work in Nepal and Tibet.

This donation complies with the City of Sydney's Support for Charities Policy adopted by Council on 24 August 2026, is in line with previous donations and aligns with objective 7.3.2 (1) of the City's Operational Plan 2026/27, which states that the City will support communities beyond our local area and international communities experiencing emergency situations.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note the impacts of climate change and the resulting floods that have devastated communities in Nepal and Tibet
- (B) Council donate \$25,000 from the 2062/27 General Contingency Fund to the Australian Committee for UNICEF Ltd (ABN 35 060 581 437) to be directed towards its recovery and humanitarian efforts in Nepal and Tibet as outlined in the subject Minute
- (C) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to arrange a program for staff donations to UNICEF's Nepal Flash Flood Appeal to support the relief effort in Nepal and Tibet and for Council to match dollar for dollar any contributions until the end of October 2026 from the 2026/27 General Contingency Fund.

THE RT HON CLOVER MOORE AO

Lord Mayor of Sydney