



Flood Management Strategy Refresh Port Phillip and Westernport

Summary of the draft Flood Strategy & Action Plan.

What is the Flood Management Strategy?

The *Flood Management Strategy Port Phillip and Westernport* (2015) takes a collaborative approach to managing flooding in the region. The strategy sets out a vision, objectives and framework to guide the ways that agencies work together before, during and after flood.

Melbourne Water coordinates the development and delivery of the strategy, as required by the Victorian government's *Floodplain Management Strategy*. This strategy is one part of a framework of legislation, policies and strategies that aim to reduce the risk posed by flooding, including to community safety.

What is the Flood Management Strategy Refresh?

The current strategy ends in June 2021. Melbourne Water is leading a 'refresh' of the strategy with our partners. Our 'partners' include any organisation in the region that has flood management responsibilities, including local and state government, water authorities and emergency services.

Together, we have developed a draft Flood Management Strategy and Action Plan to build on our strong history of flood management and on the progress made through the implementation of the 2015 strategy. Our existing approaches to flood management will continue to play a critical role, and we will also seek innovative new approaches to reduce flood risk and aim to achieve additional benefits for water security, liveability and sustainability. This document summarises the draft Flood Management Strategy and Action Plan to support consultation.

Why is this strategy important?

Flooding is a critical issue in the region. Flooding poses risks to people, property, infrastructure and the environment. Flood impacts can include deaths, injuries, property damage, social disruption, and loss or disruption of critical infrastructure and services.

It is estimated that there are over 200,000 properties across the region that have at least a 1% chance of flooding in any given year. The annual average damage caused by flooding in the region has been estimated at \$735.5 million. More properties will be impacted in the future if flood patterns change as a result of predicted climate change and increasing urbanisation. The strategy refresh is important to continue to plan for, avoid and reduce flood risks.

What is the approach to flood management?

Flood management in the region is collaborative with three main stages in the flood management process: prevention, response and recovery:

1. **Prevention** aims to reduce the impacts of flooding before a flood occurs.
2. **Response** involves responding to flood events, in particular emergency management, including providing warnings, protecting areas, and providing rescue and relief services.
3. **Recovery** supports people and communities to return to properly functioning lives.



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The draft strategy largely focuses on the prevention aspects of flood management. Prevention is a highly effective and low-cost approach to managing flood risk.

Each stage of flood management involves a range of activities led by organisations with flood management responsibilities including councils, Victoria State Emergency Service, Emergency Management Victoria and Melbourne Water.

What is the strategic approach?

The strategy is directed by a collective vision, objectives and 10-year outcomes. Under each outcome, the strategy identifies key focus areas, which guide our actions. (See Figure)

The strategy is a 10-year strategy with two consecutive five-year action plans. The first action plan will be reviewed after five years to ensure that we adapt as new information, tools and approaches become available.

The focus areas and actions comprehensively apply best-practice approaches to collectively managing flood risk, including approaches to land use planning, flood information, education, flood warnings, emergency response and recovery. The focus areas also include reducing flood effects, which involves constructing, maintaining or upgrading drainage and flood management infrastructure and multi-functional assets.



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Vision Together we are aware, responsive and resilient. Communities, business and government understand flooding, plan collaboratively for challenges and take action to manage risks and optimise opportunities, for now and the future.

Objective 1

The right information is available at the right time to the people who need it

10-year outcomes

- Agency knowledge of flood risks has improved
- Communities in flood prone areas have increased awareness of flood risk
- Flood affected communities have access to clear, appropriate and timely emergency information

Focus areas

- Fit-for-purpose information
- Community knowledge platform
- Empowering communities

(x2) 5-year Action plans

Actions

Objective 2

Flood risks and opportunities are managed to reduce impacts and get the best social, economic and environmental outcomes

10-year outcomes

- Flood impacts are reduced (relative to a do-nothing scenario)
- Land use and development in flood prone areas is appropriate to the level of flood risk
- The impacts of climate change and coastal flooding are incorporated into planning and decision making
- Integrated Water Management and flood infrastructure achieve maximum public value

Focus areas

- Flood effects reduction
- Land use planning
- Challenges of climate change
- Multiple benefits embedded in decision-making

(x2) 5-year Action plans

Actions

Objective 3

Land, water and emergency agencies work together to manage flooding effectively

10-year outcomes

- Clear roles and responsibilities allow agencies to deliver effective flood management and emergency services
- Agencies collaborate to plan for and manage flood risk and flood emergencies*

Focus areas

- Clarifying roles and responsibilities
- Emergency agency preparedness and response
- Flood recovery

(x2) 5-year Action plans

Actions

* Our collaborative approach to delivering this strategy will help deliver this outcome.



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What are the key changes in the strategy?

We have identified key directions in this strategy that provide a greater emphasis on managing climate change, empowering diverse communities, and managing flooding to achieve multiple benefits for water security, liveability and sustainability. We have also identified key changes to well-established approaches to managing flood risk. High level summaries follow.

Greater suite of tools

- We will explore innovative solutions and work to expand our suite of tools to manage flood risks.
- As new technology becomes available and new approaches to managing flooding are developed nationally and internationally, we will examine them for their suitability in our region.
- Not all approaches are viable for all situations, which means it is essential for us to have a broad suite of approaches to use.

Land use planning

Land use planning tools provide a highly effective and low-cost opportunity for flood management and play a critical role in mitigating current flood risks as well as reducing future risks.

- We will look for opportunities to implement faster planning scheme amendment processes to ensure the planning scheme contains up-to-date flood information.
- We will examine the use of planning controls to limit runoff generated upstream, that may impact downstream areas.
- We will pursue risk-based land use planning approaches to direct appropriate levels of development in flood prone areas, and importantly, keep non-compatible uses out of flood prone areas.
- We will support better urban design that will lead to more amenable public spaces.

Community resilience

- We will work to empower the community to take action to minimise loss and recover faster from flood events, by raising awareness and providing information on how to prepare for flooding.
- We will support the community by making sure that relevant flood information is accessible online.
- We will focus on the timely delivery of flash flood warnings to the community

Flood information

Understanding current and future flood risks underpins the entire flood management process.

- We will increase our focus on delivering contemporary and relevant flood information, including climate change scenarios, and sharing it with relevant agencies.
- We will share this information with the community to allow them to better understand their flood risk and take action to minimise their risk.

Climate change

- We will embed climate change in decision-making so that the decisions that we make now will consider future climate risks, minimising future flooding impacts.



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Multiple benefits

- We will deliver multiple benefits including amenity, waterway health and alternative water supply from flood management infrastructure.
- We will maximise flood benefits from stormwater infrastructure.
- Through the strategy, we aim to achieve maximum public value through investment, and contribute to a safer, cooler and more liveable city.

What does the Action Plan involve?

The five-year action plan is the first of two, consecutive, five-year action plans, to support the ten-year strategy. The first action plan will be reviewed after five years to ensure that we adapt as new information, tools and approaches become available.

The actions in this plan relate to the first five years of the strategy (2021–2026) and are subject to funding. Some actions may be included in both action plan periods (2021–2026 and 2026–2031) to ensure the 10-year directions and outcomes can be met.

The Action Plan is intended to be read in conjunction with the strategy and the documents should be considered as a package.

How will the strategy be governed, endorsed, implemented and reviewed?

The Flood Leadership Committee will have strategic oversight over implementation of the strategy and actively participate in governance of the strategy to influence and support delivery of the vision, objectives and outcomes. The Flood Leadership Committee comprises up to 15 senior representatives of the endorsing partners.

Melbourne Water will coordinate the implementation of the strategy and lead the monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement process with input and participation from endorsing partners.

Melbourne Water will seek endorsement of the strategy from agencies in the region with flood management responsibilities, including councils, emergency services and state government agencies. The endorsing partners will work together to deliver, report, and review, and renew commitments including: committing to the vision, objectives and directions; working in partnership towards implementation; and participating in annual planning, reviews, and reporting, subject to funding.

Implementation and monitoring will be a collective effort. The action plan that accompanies this strategy contains clear actions and accountabilities.



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What are the next steps?

This consultation period will be held from 8 February to 19 March 2021 and include:

- Online consultation on the draft Flood Management Strategy and Action Plan
- Consultation with flood partners, stakeholders and the community.

Followed by:

- Finalisation of strategy
- Approval of final strategy
- Endorsement and co-delivery

Who can I contact for further information?

Contact the flood strategy team at: floodstrategy@melbournewater.com.au

