Housing Statement - Two years on

Melbourne Water's contribution to Victoria's Housing Statement.

Introduction

As Greater Melbourne's floodplain manager, Melbourne Water plays a key role in enabling housing supply while maintaining flood resilience. Since the release of the Victorian Government's Housing Statement in 2023, we've significantly increased our efforts to ensure our performance supports enabling more development faster.

Through our Housing Roadmap, we've identified key areas for improvement and taken practical steps to streamline planning and unlock housing supply. Over the past year, we've made strong progress—reflected in the scorecard presented here—which tracks our performance and contribution to broader reform efforts.

Looking ahead, we're preparing to support the next phase of reform, including the New Plan for Victoria and other policy initiatives. We'll continue working closely with our partners, the planning and development sector to shape collaborative solutions that enhance resilience, deliver lasting value, and support growth and benefit communities across Melbourne.

VICTORIA State Government

Melbourne Water

1 Pillar one

Good Decisions, Made Faster to Support Growth

Streamlining processes and fast-tracking approvals in low hazard areas, to get people in homes faster.

Commitment	Progress update
Standardise and publish application information requirements to support a fast-track approvals process.	Published updated requirements for applications and referrals to support industry and councils applications reducing delays and speeding up approvals. Find more here: Developer Minimum Application Requirements Guidelines
Deliver a documented, standardised pre-application service to identify flood and drainage requirements and provide estimated decision timeframes.	**Decision-Making Policy and Procedure Framework (DMPP) Established** A new framework now streamlines development and engineering processes into a single, coordinated approach. The Framework also captures pre-development advice to ensure consistent and timely advice can be provided early in the development process, reducing the need to amend designs late in the process. **Early Triage and Completeness Check Introduced** Pre-development submissions now undergo an early review focused on identifying and resolving any missing or incomplete information from the outset. This ensures submissions are complete, accurate, and routed to the appropriate teams within MW, helping to keep projects on track and enhancing the overall service experience.
Work with local and state government to develop deemed to comply standards for low flood risk referrals to significantly reduce the number that need to be directly approved by Melbourne Water.	Continue to work collaboratively with state government on how to effectively translate hazard-based flood controls into the Victoria Planning Provisions. Advocating for streamlined processes that provide clarity and efficiency.
Explore self-certification of some drainage infrastructure using a panel of suitably qualified and experienced practitioners and use agreements with registered developers.	**Self-Certification Program Launched** The first phase of the self-certification program is now live, with the establishment of a digital portal to support accreditation with Melbourne Water. The aim of this project is fast track applications for low-risk drainage infrastructure, such as pipes and pits, supported by agreed design standards, accredited practitioners, and a robust auditing framework. Future project phases will expand to additional asset classes, helping to reduce red tape and improve application processing times.
Prioritise referrals for activity centres, priority precincts and residential areas that have no or are lower hazard areas to get them approved as fast as possible.	(See action update below under Pillar Four)

2 Pillar two
Better information to identify risk and target growth

Providing information to enable faster processing in low-risk areas while inputting earlier in the development of higher flood risk areas.

Commitment

Make flood information easily accessible to inform decisions that shape our city.

Progress update

Melbourne Water is leading a $40 million program to update flood models across all catchments in the Port Phillip and Westernport region.

Delivered in partnership with councils, the models use the latest climate data and include future flood scenarios to 2100. Covering both waterways and stormwater assets, this work supports better land use planning and development decisions. The program is on track and will help enable sustainable housing growth and resilience.

As we implement updated flood models, we are also exploring contemporary strategic planning approaches to ensure planning schemes guide land uses and development to appropriate locations based on the level of flood risk.

We will use this long term information and work with our partners to facilitate growth in safer locations in priority precincts, activity centres and other areas identified in Plan for Victoria.

Melbourne Water is working closely with the Department of Transport and Planning to ensure the most up to date information is available to decision makers within the Activity Centres and Priority Precincts programs where this work has been completed by Melbourne Water.

3 Pillar three
Greenfield Areas

Enabling the 30% growth target in greenfield areas by addressing systemic barriers that slow down approvals.

Commitment

We will explore the opportunity for Melbourne Water to build drainage infrastructure for complex, landlocked or fragmented areas. This has the potential to enable more innovative and sustainable precinct-scale solutions such as integrated water management (IWM) and stormwater harvesting solutions.

Progress update

We're working closely with the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) to align our Development Services Scheme program with Melbourne's 10-year Greenfields plan and the VPA's annual business plan.

As government priorities continue to evolve, we're collaborating with the VPA to inform the sequencing of precinct planning. We're also developing a project plan to explore options for delivering final form drainage infrastructure , supported by industry engagement through our Urban Development and Planning Strategic Collaboration Group (UDP SCG) and consultation across government.

There are no current instruments available to Melbourne Water to address hold-ups associated with out of sequence development.

Melbourne Water is working closely with the Department of Transport and Planning to ensure the most up to date information is available to decision makers within the Activity Centres and Priority Precincts programs where this work has been completed by Melbourne Water.

We will work with our partners and Government to assess future options for intervention.

4 Pillar four
Established Areas

Enabling the 70% growth target for urban infill by providing faster engineering advice to promote more development in low flood hazard areas and to more quickly identify issues in high flood hazard areas.

Commitment	Progress update
Water orientated precincts	A **Water Orientated Precincts Framework** has been developed and adapted for Integrated Water Management (IWM) forums to holistically enable resilient water planning when collaborating across industry. MW is coordinating Precinct scale IWM plans for Suburban Rail Loop precincts with IWM Forum partners to embed Water Orientated planning.
Activate priority precincts	**Fishermans Bend** Melbourne Water supported the Department of Transport and Planning in improving the planning process for new developments. By identifying essential infrastructure and application requirements, we helped ensure growth can continue while managing flood risks and protecting communities. **Arden** Melbourne Water is leading technical work to inform the Development Contributions Plan—an essential next step to support development and flood resilience in the precinct. We're actively participating in Development Victoria's bidding process to raise potential development concerns and propose solutions early, helping to streamline approvals and reduce risk.
Quicker decisions	A dedicated team was established in late 2024 to eliminate a backlog of permit applications and to lift service performance. Both goals were achieved, with over 95% of urban housing planning permit referrals processed on time since February 2025. Monthly service performance updates track progress against our standards and support transparency and improved service delivery for applicants. Visit our website here for our monthly Reports.

5 Pillar five
Innovative and well considered risk management

Work with Government to set strategic directions and find innovative ways to promote growth and development while minimising risk and navigating climate change challenges.

Commitment

Support directing new housing to low hazards areas

Progress update

MW has mapped flood risk in activity centres to identify those with the largest number of non-flood-affected residential parcels – and are currently remodelling flood risk across the entire Greater Melbourne area, including climate change forecasts to the year 2100.

This will provide greater detail and updated information on flood hazard risk levels and enable informed decisions about directing growth away from higher hazard locations.

Melbourne Water is working with the Department of Transport and Planning and Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action to share this information as it becomes available. This includes highlighting how new data may affect key development areas, to help ensure communities and planners make informed decisions.

Review managing off-site impacts

Afflux Practice Note Established

To balance risk mitigation with responsible urban growth, a new Practice Note was established by Melbourne Water. The Practice Note will support and guide a more nuanced approach to development through the introduction of a risk-based approach to the acceptability of afflux only where zero afflux is not achievable.

Evaluation of the new approach for selected urban development projects will help us to understand data gaps, ambiguities, and practical challenges. This stage will provide critical insights to support a smooth transition to risk-based flood management across the industry.