

Information Sheet

Southbank Local Floodplain Development Plan

Purpose

This information sheet provides a plain-English summary of the key flood risk and access requirements that apply to development applications within the Southbank Precinct.

It is intended to assist applicants, consultants and developers to understand the flood risk assessment requirements that apply when preparing planning permit applications under the Southbank Precinct Local Floodplain Development Plan (LFDP).

The guide should be read in conjunction with the LFDP, relevant planning controls and applicable guidelines. It does not replace those requirements but is intended to assist applicants and practitioners in navigating the LFDP requirements.

What is the LFDP?

The Southbank Local Floodplain Development Plan (LFDP) applies to land within the defined Southbank Precinct affected by the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO4) and Special Building Overlay (SBO4). These controls and the LFDP were Gazetted into the Melbourne Planning Scheme on June 11, 2026. The LFDP establishes how planning applications are assessed to ensure safe access during floods and long-term building resilience.

Why was the LFDP developed?

Southbank is already highly urbanised and is expected to continue accommodating significant development and renewal. At the same time, parts of the precinct are exposed to increasing flood risk as a result of riverine flooding, local drainage flooding and climate change.

The LFDP was developed to provide a practical framework that enables development to continue while ensuring flood risks are appropriately managed over time.

Two-tier flood assessment approach

Safe pedestrian access and egress is assessed against the 1% AEP flood event with a 2040 planning horizon. Buildings must be designed to the Nominal Flood Protection Level (NFPL), based on the 2100 1% AEP flood event plus freeboard.

What this means in practice

When considering a development proposal, Melbourne Water assesses two separate but related issues:

1. Can people safely access and leave the site during a flood event between now and the year 2040?

and

2. Can the building itself withstand future flood conditions over its expected life?

Safe access is assessed using the 2040 planning horizon, while building resilience is assessed against the 2100 planning horizon.

Safe access requirements

All development must demonstrate at least one safe pedestrian access route. Maximum flood depths are 500 mm for standard development and 300 mm for flood-vulnerable land uses such as aged care, health and childcare. Vehicle access cannot be relied upon where flood depths exceed 300 mm.

Applications that may be considered to align with the LFDP requirements will typically demonstrate:

- A clearly identifiable access and egress route.
- A route that remains available for the duration of the applicable flood event.
- Pedestrian access that remains within the applicable depth thresholds for the entirety of the route.
- Movement from the development to flood-free land or another safe destination.
- No reliance on emergency rescue or emergency services intervention.

Building design requirements

Finished floor levels must be above the NFPL. Flood-resilient materials are required below the NFPL, and critical services must be located above it. Basements should be avoided, or otherwise protected with robust flood mitigation and emergency measures.

Site Safety Access Categories

All land is classified into one of three Site Safety Access Categories based on road access flooding in the 2040 1% AEP event. The applicable category determines the level of technical assessment and the type of access solution that should be considered to enable access.

Category 1

Existing road-based access is generally available.

Applicant focus:

- Demonstrate the route.
- Confirm compliance / viability of the route.
- Provide standard flood assessment information.

Category 2

A portion of available frontage remains accessible.

Applicant focus:

- Identify the preferred access route.
- Demonstrate how occupants are directed toward that route.
- Consider minor design improvements where required.

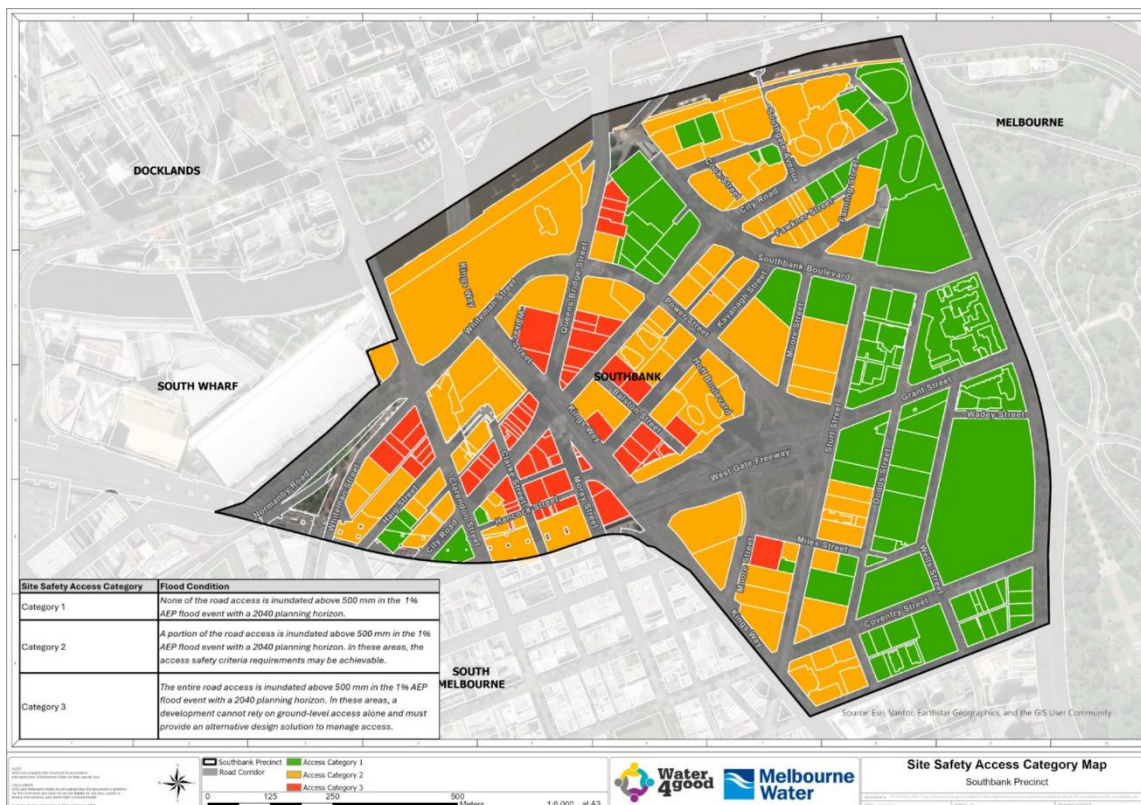
Category 3

Ground-level access alone may not provide a safe outcome.

Applicant focus:

- Explore alternative or engineered access solutions.
- Demonstrate how access remains available throughout the flood event.
- Provide a Flood Risk Management Plan.

The below map is indicative only and will be confirmed at the planning permit stage based on detailed modelling and access assessment.



Examples of Access Solutions

The LFDP recognises that some sites may require alternative or innovative approaches to demonstrate safe access and egress. Depending on the site characteristics, flood conditions and surrounding urban environment, a range of potential access solutions may be explored. These may include elevated pedestrian bridges, internal protected evacuation corridors, building-to-building connections, podium links, shared access arrangements and other site-specific design responses.

Important

The examples below are provided to illustrate the types of approaches that may be considered during the assessment process. They are not mandatory solutions, do not represent an exhaustive list of acceptable responses and should not be interpreted as indicating Melbourne Water support for a particular proposal.

The suitability of any solution depends on the specific site conditions, flood behaviour, surrounding development context, emergency management considerations and the

applicant's ability to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of the LFDP. Each application will be assessed on its own merits.

Depending on site circumstances, applicants may investigate:

Elevated pedestrian connections

- Skybridges.
- Elevated walkways.
- Building-to-building links.

Internal access solutions

- Protected internal evacuation corridors.
- Podium-level circulation routes.
- Relocated building entries.

Shared access arrangements

- Connections through neighbouring developments.
- Shared evacuation pathways.
- Access via adjoining land.

Public realm responses

- Raised pedestrian pathways.
- Modified frontage treatments.
- Improved connections to available access routes.

The suitability of any solution will depend on the flood conditions affecting the site, the ability to demonstrate that occupants can safely reach an appropriate destination, and alignment with emergency management principles.

Common Issues Identified During Assessment

Applications can experience delays where:

- Safe access routes are not clearly shown.
- Access pathways rely on assumptions rather than demonstrated outcomes.
- A solution is not able to fully deliver a safe evacuation route
- Reliance is placed on emergency services intervention.
- Reliance is placed on early evacuation.
- Reliance is placed solely on shelter-in-place arrangements.
- Supporting flood information is incomplete.

Early Engagement

Applicants are encouraged to engage with Melbourne Water early, particularly for:

- Site Safety Access Category 2 sites.
- Site Safety Access Category 3 sites.
- Proposals involving innovative access solutions.
- Applications involving multiple landowners.

Pre-application discussions can assist applicants understand flood constraints, identify key issues and reduce assessment delays.

Melbourne Water encourages early engagement for Category 2 and Category 3 sites, proposals involving innovative access solutions, and proposals relying on access arrangements involving neighbouring landowners or shared infrastructure.

Application documentation

Depending on the access category, applications must include a Flood Risk Report and, for higher-risk sites, a Flood Risk Management Plan detailing emergency access, evacuation procedures and responsibilities. The LFDP and LSIO4 / SBO4 prescribe when which relevant report(s) would be required. Developments must be capable of safe self-evacuation and must not rely on emergency services.

Key message for developers

Melbourne Water is generally supportive of development within Southbank provided flood risk is appropriately managed. Each proposal must demonstrate safe access and long-term resilience on its own merits and cannot rely on unconfirmed future public flood mitigation works.

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