



Resilient Growth, Enabling Housing

Our Housing Roadmap:
Scaling impact for tomorrow's housing needs



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I am pleased to release Melbourne Water's Housing Roadmap 2026-2029, which will guide our efforts over the next three years to support faster, more resilient housing development and growth.

As the floodplain manager for Greater Melbourne, Melbourne Water is committed to enabling housing that meets the needs of our growing city, while ensuring flood risk and climate impacts are appropriately managed. Water underpins a healthy, prosperous and liveable city, and we play a key role in ensuring all aspects of the water cycle are planned for and managed as Melbourne grows.

Since the release of our first Housing Roadmap, we have achieved significant progress through close collaboration with state agencies, local government and the development sector to address immediate system pressures, help unlock housing, and carefully manage flood risk.

This Roadmap furthers Melbourne Water's role in supporting sustainable housing growth by focusing on system-wide change, while building on our progress to date. Our priority actions, developed in partnership with stakeholders and industry, are organised under four refreshed pillars to create the greatest impact in enabling housing supply.

The refreshed Roadmap builds on our work to deliver to clear standards, further streamlining for the sector through system wide improvements in this complex area. These approaches will enable low-risk housing to proceed quickly, while providing early certainty and coordination for more complex sites.

Delivering on these actions will require close collaboration across government departments and agencies, councils and industry to achieve our shared goal of supporting resilient housing for our growing city.

I thank our agency and industry partners – in particular the Urban Planning and Development Strategic Collaboration Group – for their valuable feedback and ongoing engagement, and I look forward to this valuable collaboration continuing as we move into the next phase of delivery.



Dr Nerina Di Lorenzo - Managing Director

Dr Nerina Di Lorenzo

Managing Director
Melbourne Water



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Our role in supporting Victoria's housing goals

Melbourne Water is committed to enabling safe, resilient housing and supporting Melbourne's continued growth. We work across urban renewal areas, established suburbs and new growth areas to help create inclusive, prosperous and liveable communities.

We provide statutory planning advice, flood and drainage information, and essential drainage infrastructure. This helps ensure new development responds appropriately to flood risk and future climate conditions across the Port Phillip and Westernport region.

Our Housing Roadmap provides a coordinated, system-wide approach to supporting housing growth. By strengthening our systems and adopting adaptive and innovative approaches, we aim to increase our contribution to housing supply and provide clearer, more consistent guidance for faster and more resilient housing delivery.

Greater Melbourne Flood Information Program

Improving flood information, through sophisticated flood modelling, is a significant multi-year program for Melbourne Water. It helps us better understand the risk of current and future flooding, so we can build a safe and resilient city for today, tomorrow and for generations to come.

Our progress

Since releasing our initial Housing Roadmap in 2024, we have made strong progress in enabling faster, smarter and more resilient development. We have made significant improvements to our planning performance, consistency and transparency.

Key highlights include:

- Processing over 28,000 planning applications, resulting in over 72,000 new housing lots since July 2024
- 98% of planning applications within our service standards since March 2025
- Developing an innovative, precinct-based response to assessing flood-safe access in Southbank
- Establishing a new, more risk-balanced approach to floodplain management through the revised Afflux Practice Note
- Making major progress on our accelerated Greater Melbourne Flood Information Program, which has been rolled out to eight local council areas with community engagement a central feature of the program.

This Roadmap carries forward our core work, including the continued rollout of the **Greater Melbourne Flood Information Program** and modernisation and integration of our **Development Services Schemes**, ensuring continuity and momentum. It also furthers efficiencies in planning processes, by exploring accelerated pathways for low-risk approvals.



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Scaling our impact: 2026 – 2029

Our refreshed Housing Roadmap sets new priority actions organised under four pillars, that provide clear direction on where to focus our efforts for greatest impact over the next three years. These actions outline how we will lift system performance, improve consistency, and work with partners across the planning system to support housing delivery at scale.

As new flood and climate modelling and drainage information becomes available, the emerging data presents both challenges and opportunities. While clearer information is becoming available earlier in the planning process, the system must adapt to apply it consistently and confidently in decision making.

Our Roadmap takes a proactive approach by adopting innovative ways to strengthen and streamline system performance. This includes creating clearer and faster pathways for low-risk development, enabling earlier coordination for complex sites, and integrating flood and climate information into strategic and precinct-level planning to improve certainty and investment confidence.

We will deliver the Roadmap actions across Melbourne Water while continuing to engage with our stakeholders, and we will monitor and report on our progress against these actions.

Our objective

To strengthen Melbourne Water's role in supporting housing supply while managing flood risk efficiently by:

Delivering faster, more transparent, risk-based urban planning that supports housing and urban development in suitable locations, while addressing flood and climate risks earlier through coordinated land-use planning and infrastructure responses.

Planning and Development Sector Hub

The Planning and Development Sector Hub, has been created specifically for Melbourne Water planning and development customers to provide regular updates, including our monthly performance reporting, and improvement projects.



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System outcome

A drainage and flood planning system that is faster, clearer and more predictable, enabling low-risk housing to proceed quickly and providing early certainty and coordination for complex sites.

The Roadmap is focused on these system outcomes across industry, councils and state government.



Industry

- Clear and consistent upfront requirements
- Fewer late-stage changes and redesign
- Predictable assessment timeframes that support confident delivery



Councils

- Strong alignment between planning controls, referrals and servicing
- Earlier clarity on constraints and infrastructure needs
- Smoother progression from strategic planning to approvals



State Government Departments

- Consistent, risk-based referral decisions focused on material issues
- Faster pathways for low-risk housing delivery
- Clear line of sight between planning reform, infrastructure and housing outcomes

Melbourne Water's role

Housing enablement through application advice and processing, drainage works, and flood information whilst balancing flood risk

Our Four Pillars

1 Smart risk-based approvals

Improving our internal planning systems and processes so that we better support housing delivery as Melbourne grows.

2 Flood and climate information that enables growth

Providing and applying flood information to improve resilience and manage risks to people, property and places.

3 Unlocking complex greenfield areas

Improving processes and enabling innovation in the delivery of new suburbs.

4 Enabling resilient inner urban communities

Supporting flood resilience and housing delivery across established urban areas through strategic planning.



Pillar 1

Smart risk-based approvals

Improving our internal planning systems and processes so that we better support housing delivery as Melbourne grows.



1. **Build on existing quality assurance to deliver clearer, risk-based and, where appropriate, certified pathways for low-risk drainage assets.**

We will build on existing quality assurance arrangements, to provide clearer and more proportionate pathways for low-risk drainage assets.

This will reduce unnecessary reassessment and support faster, more predictable statutory outcomes over time, including through self-certification where appropriate.

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2. **Explore opportunities to automate low complexity, low risk projects to streamline approvals.**

We will explore opportunities to systematise low complexity, low risk projects to streamline approvals by reducing manual processing.

This will redirect effort to higher risk assessments where greater detailed technical input is needed.

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3. **Expand and publish our suite of application guidance to clearly set out development expectations and asset standards across all application types, supporting well-prepared and complete applications.**

We will provide clear, consistent guidance to give applicants confidence about what is required upfront, leading to more accurate and complete submissions.

This will reduce the need for rework or clarification during assessment and help applications progress more smoothly and quickly through approvals.

4. **Provide improved transparency and reporting on application processing.**

We will provide transparency that enables clear visibility of requirements, timeframes and application progress.

This will reduce follow-ups, rework and late-stage surprises during assessment, and build confidence through consistent, transparent reporting on performance.

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5. **Investigate different development facilitation approaches for high priority applications.**

We will examine flexible approaches to better support high-priority housing applications.

This will target earlier coordination and clearer pathways where system benefits are greatest, and maintain rigour and consistency while improving certainty and delivery outcomes.





1. Use updated flood mapping to help inform planning controls and explain where flood risk may affect land.

We will progressively apply the most up-to-date flood mapping within hazard-based planning controls to inform planning decisions.

This will provide clearer, more consistent guidance for precinct planning and development across Melbourne, and support more confident planning and investment decisions by reducing uncertainty about flood risk.

2. Develop and maintain a flood-hazard spatial framework that clearly maps flood risk and identifies areas suitable for housing growth.

We will progressively provide clear, accessible spatial information on flood risk to support strategic planning and decision making.

This will help councils and government identify suitable locations for housing growth and understand constraints earlier in the process.

3. Collaborate with partners to clarify how future climate conditions are applied in planning and infrastructure design.

We will introduce updated guidance at appropriate delivery stages, providing clarity and continuity for projects already underway.

This will improve consistency and certainty for future proposals while protecting delivery confidence for in-flight developments.

4. Make region-wide flood and hazard data publicly available online, ensuring information is current, reliable and accessible.

We will provide planners, landowners, developers and councils easy access to trusted flood and hazard information early in project planning.

This will support better site selection, feasibility testing and design decisions by reducing data gaps and uncertainty, and improve consistency across planning and referral decisions by providing a shared, up-to-date information source.





1. Work with industry to modernise the Development Services Scheme (DSS) engineering review process so flood and drainage asset information for active DSS areas is kept current, reliable and easy to access.

We will ensure that the flood and drainage information used by industry and councils is up to date and dependable throughout the life of a DSS.

This will reduce uncertainty and rework by giving proponents clearer, more consistent inputs for planning, design and staging decisions, and support faster, better-sequenced infrastructure delivery by enabling more confident and timely decision-making in growth areas.

2. Enhance the Development Services Scheme (DSS) financial review process, including updated DSS principles, to provide clear, current and transparent funding arrangements aligned with infrastructure delivery.

We will provide industry and councils with clearer, multi-year funding projections that align with the timing and sequencing of drainage infrastructure.

This will improve investment confidence by making costs, timing and responsibilities more transparent over the life of a DSS, and support coordinated delivery of drainage infrastructure, helping unlock housing supply in greenfield growth areas.

3. Explore new pathways and approaches to drainage infrastructure planning and delivery to remove barriers to accelerate housing supply and affordability.

We will examine alternative ways to plan, fund and deliver drainage infrastructure that better support timely housing development.

This will reduce upfront barriers, delays and sequencing challenges that can constrain housing supply or increase costs, and enable more flexible, coordinated infrastructure delivery that supports faster housing outcomes and improved affordability, while maintaining appropriate flood risk management.





1. **Develop an adaptive framework that enables place-based transition to changing flood and climate risks over time.**

We will provide a structured, place-based way to plan for changing flood and climate risks over time.

This will bring together local knowledge, community input and climate information to guide responses tailored to each area.

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2. **Provide precinct and municipal-level flood risk assessments that clearly identify place-based measures to enable urban intensification.**

We will provide early, place-based clarity on flood risk to support more informed planning, site selection and investment decisions.

This will help planners and proponents identify locations for housing growth and understand constraints earlier, reducing late redesign and delays and support consistent decision making.

3. **Explore cost recovery approaches to deliver drainage infrastructure that supports urban infill development.**

We will explore cost recovery approaches that enable timely provision of drainage infrastructure to support urban infill development.

This will improve clarity and fairness around how infrastructure costs are shared, reducing uncertainty for government, councils and proponents supporting feasible and coordinated infill development.

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4. **Finalise and apply Melbourne Water's Water Oriented Precincts (WOP) Framework to inform flood mitigation and water management at the precinct scale, across growth and redevelopment areas.**

We will apply a consistent, place-based framework to guide how water is planned for and integrated into precincts from the outset.

This will support more coordinated, efficient outcomes by aligning land use, water outcomes and infrastructure at the precinct level rather than site by site.





Implementation approach

The Roadmap will be supported by an annual action plan that clearly outlines the priorities, alignment, timing, sequencing, ownership, resourcing and performance measures for delivery over the next three years.

Engagement with industry and government has highlighted the following principles, which will guide annual planning and help establish priorities for our initial year of implementation.

- 1. Fast-tracking low-risk approvals**
- 2. Coordinating decisions across the system**
- 3. Releasing updated flood controls and drainage models**
- 4. Removing delivery bottlenecks**

We will undertake regular monitoring and reporting against the action plan to measure progress and outcomes. This will support continuous improvement, enable timely escalation and decision making, and ensure our contribution to housing delivery is coordinated, outcome focused, and responsive to emerging priorities, risks and opportunities.

We will continue to engage with state government agencies, local councils and industry stakeholders – including the Urban Planning and Development Strategic Collaboration Group and its working groups.

In our ongoing collaboration, we are committed to delivering responsive, customer-focused service and continuous improvement. We will be guided by the following principles.

Outcome focused delivery – prioritising actions that unlock housing supply and improve system performance.

Collaboration and alignment – working in partnership with government, councils and industry to ensure coordinated delivery and shared accountability.

Proportionality and sequencing – targeting effort where it will have the greatest impact, and sequencing actions to manage risk and capacity.

Transparency and adaptability – clearly tracking progress and adjusting actions in response to evidence, feedback and changing conditions.

Our success will be measured through ongoing reporting against our Development Application Service Standards, customer satisfaction, and delivery of the action plan milestones.





Roadmap outcomes

The actions in this Roadmap set a pathway for a drainage and planning system that is **faster, clearer and more predictable for customers**.

We will deliver services that are:

- **Risk-based and efficient** – Smart planning approval pathways will allow low-complexity, low-risk development to proceed more quickly, supported by clear, consistent, transparent reporting. Updated flood and climate information will inform planning for flood risk, helping government, councils and industry make more confident choices about where future housing growth can occur safely and sustainably.
- **Coordinated and enabling** – Complex greenfield precincts will be unlocked through earlier coordination and better alignment of land use, drainage and infrastructure delivery, reducing delays and uncertainty over sequencing and costs. In established urban areas, a clearer water-oriented planning framework and reliable hazard guidance will support more feasible and resilient infill development.
- **Resilient urban communities** – Long-term adaptive planning will strengthen community safety and support housing delivery, ensuring Melbourne can grow at the right pace and in the right places while adapting to changing flood and climate risks.

Together, these outcomes will contribute to a drainage and planning system that scales housing delivery while protecting our city, environment and way of life for generations to come.

