



Flood Management Strategy Refresh Port Phillip and Westernport

Frequently Asked Questions

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 includes a vision and objectives and outlines how agencies will work together to understand, avoid and reduce flood risks, and how we can support flood emergency preparation and response, across the region.

What area does the strategy cover?

The strategy covers approximately 13,000 square kilometres, extending from high in the Yarra Ranges to the east, to Ballan in the west, to Kinglake in the north, and south to include Mornington Peninsula, and Phillip and French Islands.

Why are we refreshing the Flood Management Strategy?

The current strategy ends in June 2021. Melbourne Water is leading a 'refresh' of the strategy in line with our role as the regional floodplain manager, and our requirement in the Victorian government's *Victorian Floodplain Management Strategy*.

The strategy refresh builds 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.

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 are the roles and responsibilities of partners?

Many organisations manage flooding in the region including councils, water authorities, state government and emergency management services.

We have responsibilities for protecting people, infrastructure, assets and the environment. We work together as partners and with communities.

Key roles and responsibilities are:

- **Melbourne Water** is responsible for planning and delivery of regional flood management and drainage services.
- **Councils** manage local drainage systems, contribute to Integrated Water Management and support community recovery from flood events.
- **Victorian government** departments and agencies set policies, guidelines, standards and strategies for floodplain management.
- **Emergency services** agencies lead emergency preparation and response, deliver community awareness and education programs and provide flood warnings to the community.

What has been the refresh process so far?

In recognition of the number of stakeholders involved in the delivery of Melbourne's flood and drainage services, the refresh will continue to be a regional, multi-agency strategy, delivered by a range of partners.

We have built the draft Flood Management Strategy and Action Plan through extensive consultation with organisations with a flood management responsibility in the region including councils, water authorities, state government and emergency management services. We have engaged through three stakeholder workshops and one senior leadership workshop to build the content of the drafts. To date, sixty-two organisations have participated in the engagement, including partners and other relevant stakeholders.

What is the strategic approach in the flood strategy refresh?

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.

The strategy will be 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 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.

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.

How is climate change addressed in the strategy?

Climate change increases flood risk as the intensity of rainfall events increases, severe storms become more common, and the sea level rises. Our response to climate change will be embedded in the strategy so that the decisions that we make now will consider future climate risks, minimising future flooding impacts.

Current conditions also influence the risk of flooding. The Bureau of Meteorology has advised that there is a higher chance of significant rainfall over the coming months, due to a La Niña. In the event of La Niña taking place there may be high velocity storms, frequent heavy rain and heavier stormwater runoff in the street drains, waterways and outfalls, and therefore an increased chance of flooding.

What happens after the strategy is finalised?

After working collaboratively with a broad range of partners to ensure the strategy refresh is relevant and representative of a collective approach to flood management, all partners that have flood management responsibilities will work together to implement the Action Plan.

Who can I contact for further information?

You can contact the flood strategy team at: floodstrategy@melbournewater.com.au