

MANAGING FLOOD RISKS IN LARA



The purpose of this fact sheet is to explain how we are changing what we do to better manage flood risks in Lara.

The Lara township experiences frequent and significant flood events. The relatively flat terrain makes the area susceptible to widespread, shallow stormwater flooding. Being positioned on the banks of Hovells Creek, the township is also at risk of riverine flooding.

Significant flood events impacting parts of the Lara community were recorded in 1933, 1973, 1983, 1988, 1995, 2005 and 2010. Localised flooding has also impacted individual properties during this time.

The most recently completed Lara Flood Study has improved our understanding of flood risk in the area. "Our increasing population, a rapidly growing economy and climate change are putting increasing pressure on our stormwater systems. It is important that we account for these pressures to ensure we continue to deliver the services the community expects."¹, it is timely to explain what we're planning to do to help the Lara community prepare.

Did you know?

All new developments in Victoria require sustainable floodplain management and drainage planning works to prevent proposed developments from increasing flood risks for existing communities.

WHAT WE'RE ALREADY DOING

Overseeing planning and building controls

As an identified growth area for residential, commercial and industrial development, Lara's steady population growth over the past 30 years has altered the way land is used in a way that has the potential to increase stormwater runoff.

Our obligation to plan communities in a way that minimises flood risk is enshrined in both the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the *Greater Geelong Planning Scheme*.

We also have a responsibility to enforce building controls in areas liable to flooding.

Preparing for flood response and recovery

We work in partnership with emergency services and other agencies to plan for, and respond, to flooding emergencies. In Lara, we manage our flood response according to a series of plans, which include the *Hovells Creek – Lara Precinct Flood Emergency Plan*.

Investigating and managing existing flood risks

We assess and, if possible, treat existing flood risks in conjunction with the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority.

To assist with this work, we have carried out a series of investigations to help us better understand how flooding impacts parts of the Lara community. The most recent of these was completed in 2020.

What we have learnt through our investigations is that structural solutions are not always available – or feasible – for the challenges facing Lara.

Our goal therefore must be to look for alternative solutions to help the Lara community address flood risks in a proactive way.

WHAT WE PLAN TO DO

Share updated information

We will make the latest flood data available to the community to assist residents to prepare for flood events.

By providing the latest flood maps to the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority for use on their website, residents will have the information they need to assess flood levels and velocities within a property.

We will also share this information with the Victoria State Emergency Service so they can update community resources, share more accurate predictions about flood risks and assist the community to better prepare.

Designate land liable to flooding

The Annual Exceedance Probability – more commonly referred to as the 'AEP' – refers to the likelihood of a flood of given size

(or larger) occurring in any one year. It is usually expressed as a percentage.

We will update the current extent of land liable to flooding with the latest 1% AEP flood extent. The minimum floor levels of building proposals within the flood prone land will be advised in the Council Report and Consent in accordance to Regulation 153 and 154 of the Building Regulations 2018.

Revise the planning scheme

We will undertake a planning scheme amendment to update the current flood related planning overlays with the Lara Flood Study outcome on Floodway Overlay (FO), Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO) and Special Building Overlay (SBO) along with the Urban Floodway Zone (UFZ), Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ) and Public Park and Recreational Zone (PPRZ) in the Study area.

This will help ensure that all buildings and developments constructed in these areas are built to a standard that will protect them against future flooding.

As part of this process, we will also consider how climate change analysis can be incorporated into the planning scheme.

Revise water management processes in growth areas

To establish clear guidelines for new developments in the catchment, we will prepare a Catchment Management Strategy for the Hovells Creek catchment, which includes stormwater management objectives and include the Northern Geelong Growth Area and other notable land development.

Our future plans and strategies will include policy and design notes that guide how we apply climate change scenarios to urban development.

Update Municipal Flood Emergency Plan

We will provide information for VICSES to update the Municipal Flood Emergency Plan to make sure that the most efficient preparation, response and recovery arrangements are in place at a municipal level.

Improve how we manage roads and transport

We will install flood warning signs at new locations identified as being 'at risk' as part of our most recent flood study.

We will also develop community information designed to help people stay safe – for example, information about safety around flood water, alternative routes and wayfinding signage.

Improve how we manage drainage infrastructure and assets

We will identify critical drainage assets in Lara and assign an appropriate regime of inspection and maintenance to them.

We will also develop a detailed infrastructure management manual. As well as outlining inspection and maintenance regimes, it will also identify priority capital works for drainage infrastructure in the region.

Improve the flood warning system

We will liaise with DELWP, BoM, VICSES and CCMA to determine the current capabilities and future requirements of the flood warning system for the Hovells Creek catchment and Avalon Road catchments with a view to increase the accuracy and timeliness of warnings provided by the system and communicate these warnings to the community effectively.

Structural mitigation works

The outcomes of Lara Flood Study and further investigations have helped us identify structural mitigation works that could be used to reduce flooding problems in several low-lying residential areas of Lara. Our investigations identified two projects below – each valued at over \$1 million – that could have some positive impact. Project B would rely on Project A to work effectively and reduce the flooding problems of the areas.

- Project A - Lipson Drive Pipe and Open Drain
- Project B - Kyema Drive Two Pumps and Rising Mains

Where projects create new assets or upgrade existing assets which provide special benefit to a property, we may investigate the possibility of implementing a Special Rates and Charges Scheme with those property owners likely to benefit.

For more information about how we're managing flood risks in Lara, please go to <https://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/stormwater>

¹ City of Greater Geelong (2020) *City of Greater Geelong Stormwater Services Strategy 2020–30*, p 5.

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