

Common questions about updated flood information

Transcript

Andrew Mellor, Melbourne Water, Manager Flood Awareness Communications:

As the Greater Melbourne Flood Information Program continues to roll out updated flood maps, we've spoken with local communities, and a range of common questions and queries continue to come up.

We'd like to walk through some of these to help you better understand what the information means.

'I've never experienced flooding.'

We hear this quite often – and it may be absolutely true for your property.

Flood maps show where flooding could occur under certain conditions - not just where it has happened in the past.

So even if you haven't experienced flooding before, your area may still be at risk during a significant storm event.

'Is the data accurate for my property?'

The draft flood maps have been developed by specialists using detailed data and advanced flood modelling techniques.

One of the key inputs is LiDAR, a laser-based technology that measures ground levels very precisely.

This is combined with information about:

- rainfall
- drainage systems
- land use, and
- past flood events.

Together, this helps build a reliable picture of flood risk across an area.

However, we recognise that local conditions can vary. That's why your feedback is so important.

If you're aware of:

- past flooding
- engineered structures
- changes to the land

You can share this with us to help improve the flood maps.

'Does this mean my property will definitely flood?'

The draft flood maps show what could happen during a flood with a 1% chance of occurring in any given year (sometimes referred to as a 1-in-100 year event). They are our best predictions.

They're designed to help you understand flood risk - not predict exactly what will happen at a specific time.

'Why is my property affected when my neighbour's isn't?'

Flood risk can vary, even between properties that are close together.

Small differences in ground levels, drainage conditions and how water flows across the land can all affect how flooding behaves.

'Are the maps creating the risk?'

No – the flood maps don't create flood risk. The flood risk already exists in the landscape.

The maps simply use the best available data and modelling to help us better understand and communicate that risk.

'Will this affect insurance, planning or property values?'

Insurance premiums are set by insurance companies. If you have questions about your policy or premiums, it's best to speak directly with your insurance provider.

In some cases, having clearer information about your flood risk – especially if your property is at lower risk or built above flood levels – can be helpful in those discussions.

While the flood maps are in draft, they are not used for statutory planning decisions.

Property values are influenced by many factors, such as location, market demand and local amenities. Flood risk is just another factor to consider.

There is more information on our website to explain these queries in more detail.

'Can you fix flooding by upgrading drains?'

It might seem like a simple solution to build larger or more drains.

However, during extreme rainfall events, the volume of water can exceed what any drainage system can handle.

This means flooding cannot be entirely eliminated.

Upgrading drainage infrastructure is also not always practical due to:

- Limited space in built-up areas
- Potential impacts on existing infrastructure; and
- Significant costs and disruption from this work.

That's why we take a combined approach, including:

- Infrastructure upgrades and maintenance
- Planning controls; and
- Community awareness and education.

'What is Melbourne Water doing to reduce flood risk?'

While floods can't be prevented entirely, we're working to reduce flood risk and support our communities.

We do this by:

- building new drainage infrastructure
- upgrading and maintaining existing flood and drainage systems
- partnering with councils on flood management projects, and
- supporting land use planning controls, flood warning systems and community education

'Is there anything I can do?'

Yes – there are practical steps you can take.

Understanding your flood risk is the first step.

From there, you can:

- prepare your home
- review your insurance, and
- make an emergency plan.

There is more information on our website to explain what you can do.

For most people, this program is about increasing flood awareness and helping you feel more prepared.

If you're planning to build, renovate or develop, it's important to consider flood risk early – including building location and design.

We encourage you to explore the flood maps and resources provided at your own pace.

If you need support, we're here to help. You can register for community information session or contact us by phone or email.

Together, we can prepare and plan for a safer, more resilient flood future.