

Pathway for community feedback on flood mapping

Why community feedback is important

The Greater Melbourne Flood Information Program combines detailed flood modelling, local data, engineering assessments and independent technical review to develop flood maps that align with industry practice and relevant national standards. The modelling process includes rigorous quality assurance and independent external review before draft flood maps are released for community consultation.

Community consultation is an important part of this process. Local residents, businesses and landowners can provide valuable information that may help Melbourne Water better understand how flooding has affected an area and identify physical changes that may influence flood behaviour.

Community feedback helps ensure flood information reflects both technical expertise and local knowledge.

What feedback are we seeking?

We encourage feedback that provides local knowledge and evidence that may improve the accuracy of flood mapping.

Community feedback is most valuable when it provides new information to Melbourne Water, including:

- accounts of previous flooding or lived experience during flood events
- historical photographs, records or observations of flooding
- information about engineered structures or landforms that may influence flood behaviour
- information about drainage infrastructure, waterways, levees, retarding basins or other flood-related assets
- survey information, engineering reports or other relevant technical information
- identification of factual errors relating to property, infrastructure or topographic information.

What information may result in a change to flood mapping?

Flood mapping may be reviewed where a community member provides evidence relating to one or more of the following:

Localised landform changes

Demonstrable differences in ground levels that may influence flood extents, flood levels or flow paths.

This may include:

- survey information identifying differences in land levels
- inaccuracies in LiDAR-derived ground levels
- LiDAR artefacts beneath building footprints
- more recent topographic information than what has been used in the assessment.

Engineered structures

Permanent engineered structures that alter overland flood behaviour (supported by a structural engineering report).

Examples may include:

- levees
- flood walls
- engineered embankments
- other permanent flood-resistant structures.

In areas subject to shallow overland flooding, Melbourne Water may apply engineering judgement when assessing whether barriers or structures are likely to influence flow paths or flood extent.

LiDAR limitations

Evidence that limitations or inaccuracies in LiDAR data are creating localised anomalies in flood mapping that may affect the representation of flood behaviour.

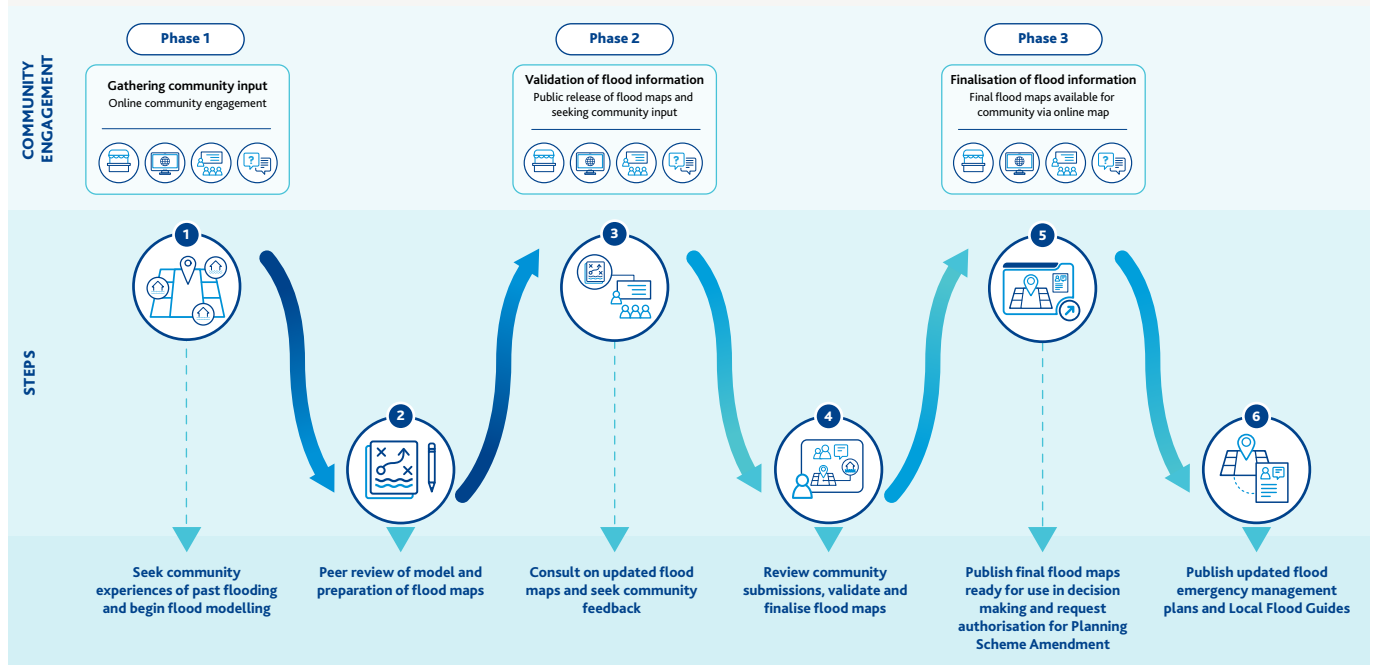
What feedback is outside the scope of consultation?

The consultation process is not intended to repeat, audit or debate the technical flood modelling process.

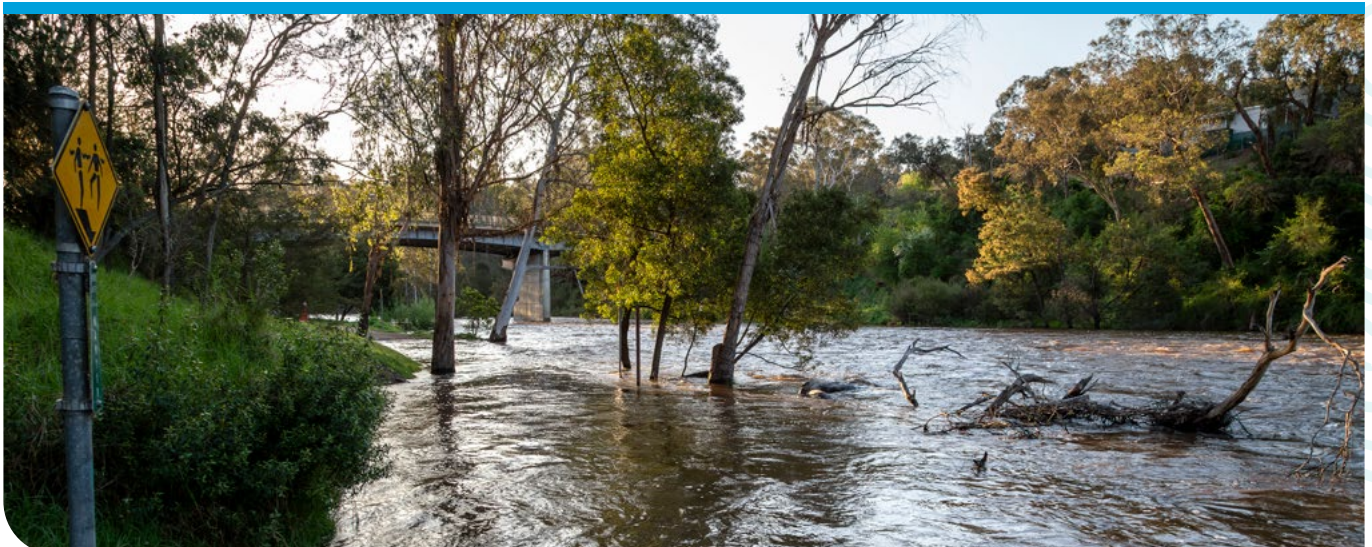
Melbourne Water is not seeking feedback on:

- the scientific methodology used to develop the flood model
- technical modelling assumptions that have been assessed through the modelling and review process
- requests to remove a flood overlay or flood risk designation without supporting evidence
- objections based solely on impacts to property value or future development potential
- repeated submissions raising issues that have already been responded to.

Flood models are developed using accepted technical approaches and are subject to detailed review, including independent external review. Community consultation focuses on whether there is relevant local information or evidence that should be considered, rather than challenging the modelling framework itself.



Process map and steps for flood mapping



1 Community feedback

Purpose

To provide community members with an opportunity to share local flood knowledge, historical information and relevant evidence during the consultation period. There are two phases (Phase 1 and Phase 2) where community feedback can be provided.

Melbourne Water will:

- acknowledge submissions received
- review the information provided
- assess whether the information is relevant to the flood mapping assessment
- consider whether any further investigation is required and a site inspection may be required. Melbourne Water will only undertake a site visit if they believe it will assist the assessment
- provide a written response outlining the outcome.

Possible outcomes

- Information contributes to a map update or further investigation.
- No change is required following assessment.



2 Technical discussion

If a resident or property owner remains dissatisfied following Melbourne Water's formal response, they may request a technical discussion. This happens during Step 4 and before Phase 3 begins.

What this involves

The resident or property owner may request:

- a meeting with a Melbourne Water technical specialist
- meetings may be held either online or in-person, depending on the circumstances and the nature of the information being discussed.

Melbourne Water requires a list of questions, concerns and issues intended to be discussed at the meeting at least **14 days before the scheduled meeting** to ensure the appropriate technical specialists can review and prepare in advance. Please email:

enquiries@melbournewater.com.au

The purpose of the meeting is to:

- explain the technical assessment
- clarify how Melbourne Water considered the information provided
- discuss the basis of Melbourne Water's decision
- improve understanding of the flood mapping outcome.

Important

This stage provides an opportunity for explanation and clarification.

Melbourne Water will consider all information and evidence provided. Melbourne Water may determine that an online meeting is sufficient and that a site visit is not required, based on the information available and the matters being raised.

To support an open and constructive discussion, Melbourne Water does not permit meetings to be audio or video recorded. Any request by a participant to record the meeting on any device will be politely declined.

This meeting is intended to help residents and property owners better understand Melbourne Water's technical assessment and the basis for its decision. While this meeting will not generally alter Melbourne Water's decision regarding the technical flood mapping outcome, any genuinely new and relevant information or evidence may still be considered. The focus of the meeting is to explain the assessment process and the reasons for the outcome.

3 Complaint about process or conduct

If concerns relate to Melbourne Water's conduct, communication or enquiry handling, community members may access Melbourne Water's formal complaints process.

Examples may include:

- delays in responding
- concerns about communication
- concerns that published processes were not followed
- customer service or staff conduct concern.

You can lodge a complaint with Melbourne Water at:

<https://www.melbournewater.com.au/about/contact-us/complaints>

What is not covered

The complaint process is not intended to review or overturn technical flood modelling outcomes.

A complaint cannot be used to challenge scientific conclusions or technical assessments that have already been completed through Melbourne Water's established technical review processes.

4 External review

If a community member remains dissatisfied after Melbourne Water's complaint process has been completed, they may contact the Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria (EWOV).

EWOV provides an independent dispute resolution service for customers and water authorities.

EWOV cannot change flood mapping outcomes, alter flood extents or remove a property from a mapped flood area. However, EWOV may consider whether Melbourne Water has acted fairly and followed an appropriate process.

You can lodge a complaint with EWOV at:

<https://www.ewov.com.au/>



When is a matter considered closed?

Melbourne Water is committed to considering all feedback fairly, transparently and consistently.

Once all available review and complaint pathways have been completed, and no significant new information has been provided, Melbourne Water will determine that a matter has been finalised.

At that point, Melbourne Water may advise that no further correspondence will be entered into unless additional relevant information or evidence becomes available.

A matter may be considered finalised where:

- the technical assessment has been completed
- relevant information provided through consultation has been considered
- any requested technical discussion has occurred
- any complaint investigation has been completed
- no significant new information or evidence has been provided
- requested information has already been supplied where appropriate
- further correspondence would not change the outcome.

While some customers have sought access to detailed technical modelling outputs, Melbourne Water is unable to provide certain modelling files and software-specific outputs, as they are generated within specialised modelling platforms that are not widely accessible and may not be meaningful without the relevant software and technical expertise.

Final advice to community members

Where Melbourne Water has:

- considered the feedback provided
- completed its assessment and review processes
- responded to any complaints raised
- no significant new information has been identified.

The matter will be considered closed.

Community members remain free to seek independent advice or contact any external body that has jurisdiction over their concerns. However, Melbourne Water will not enter into ongoing correspondence on matters that have already been fully considered unless significant new evidence becomes available.

Keep up to date with what's happening

For more information about this project or our other activities please call 131 722 or visit <http://www.melbournewater.com.au/water-and-environment/flooding-and-drainage/greater-melbourne-flood-information-program>



To access the TTY and Interpreter Services:
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