



Phase 3 – Engagement Summary

Maribyrnong River catchment flood mitigation study

October 2026

Acknowledgement of Country

Melbourne Water respectfully acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water on which all Australians rely.

We pay our respects to Bunurong and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung peoples as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water of the Maribyrnong River. We pay our deepest respects to their Elders past and present.

Executive summary

This summary provides an overview of Phase 3 community and stakeholder engagement for the Maribyrnong River catchment flood mitigation study (the study).

Phase 3 of community and stakeholder engagement for the study took place from June to August 2026 and sought feedback to:

- Understand how shortlisted mitigation options may affect different areas;
- Explore how options may work together to reduce flood risk across the catchment through Example Combinations of options;
- Identify and discuss key trade-offs between options; and
- Understand what matters most when balancing outcomes such as safety, cost, timing and community impact.

Phase 3 engagement included a mix of online and in-person activities across the catchment involving the broader community living and working in the catchment, and key stakeholders.

This phase provided valuable insights from participants into community priorities and preferences when considering trade-offs between flood mitigation approaches. This feedback will help inform the development of the preferred combination of flood mitigation options and the pathway to implementation, alongside technical and feasibility assessments during Phase 4 of the study.

Findings presented in this summary report reflect feedback received through Phase 3 engagement activities. The findings are qualitative and reflect the views, experiences and perspectives of participants who chose to engage. While they are not intended to be statistically representative of the broader catchment population, they provide valuable insights into participant priorities, concerns and aspirations relating to flood risk management.

The study team and Melbourne Water would like to extend our appreciation to everyone who contributed feedback in Phase 3 - thank you for your time and participation.

What we heard

Community feedback during Phase 3 engagement reflected a broad range of views, experiences and priorities. Participants expressed both support for and concerns about different mitigation approaches, including levees, retarding basins, flood-resilient homes and broader questions about the role, scale and cost of flood mitigation. The feedback summarised in this report reflects the views shared by participants during Phase 3 and is not intended to represent a single community view.

Example Combinations

Participants were invited to provide feedback on three Example Combinations of flood mitigation measures. The three Example Combinations were developed as conceptual engagement tools to help participants explore how different mitigation measures could work together to reduce flood risk and understand the associated trade-offs.

The combinations presented different degrees of flood risk reduction, cost, community impacts and implementation complexity.

They were developed for engagement purposes to help explore different approaches to flood mitigation and should not be interpreted as preferred solutions or final recommendations.

Feedback on the Example Combinations highlighted several key themes:

- Preference among many participants for options that delivered meaningful reductions in flood risk.
- Support for combining short-term and long-term mitigation measures.
- Recognition that greater levels of protection may involve higher costs and broader impacts.
- Interest in staged implementation and early action while larger projects are progressed.

- Detailed findings relating to each Example Combination are provided in the body of this report.

To find out more about all three of the Example Combinations visit the [Let's Talk website](https://letstalk.melbournewater.com.au/maribyrnong-river-flood-model/flood-mitigation-study/phase-3) and the Flood Mitigation Explorer Tool: letstalk.melbournewater.com.au/maribyrnong-river-flood-model/flood-mitigation-study/phase-3.

Views on Trade-offs

Participants expressed a wide range of views, ideas and concerns about how flood risk should be reduced and the trade-offs involved. Many participants acknowledged that reducing flood risk requires balancing competing priorities.

Many Phase 3 participants expressed a preference for options that delivered higher levels of flood protection, even where these involved higher costs, larger-scale infrastructure, longer delivery timeframes, or impacts on local areas. Other participants questioned the scale, cost or necessity of major mitigation works. Participants also raised concerns about potential impacts on local amenity, environmental values, property, community character and the implementation of measures such as levees and retarding basins.

Key themes included:

- Greater flood protection weighed against impacts on local amenity and place values.
- Consideration of upper catchment impacts alongside opportunities to reduce flood risk in the lower catchment.
- Support from many participants for higher levels of protection, despite increased cost.
- Recognition of trade-offs between long-term protection and faster delivery.
- Interest in larger-scale interventions where meaningful flood risk reduction could be demonstrated.
- Requests for clearer information about flood impacts, mitigation measures, costs and implementation.

Key insights

Across all engagement activities, several key insights emerged from Phase 3:

- Diverse and different views across the catchment. There is no single perspective that represented all community members. Participants across the catchment shared a wide range of views on flood mitigation, often shaped by where they live and their experiences.

- Protecting people and places remains a key priority for community members and stakeholders who participated across Phase 3 engagement activities.
- Many participants expressed support for short term actions like warning and preparedness improvements alongside longer-term mitigation measures.
- The community sought reassurance that impacts will be understood and managed, particularly in relation to retarding basins, levees and flood-resilient homes.
- Environmental outcomes remain important. Many participants supported flood mitigation measures but also highlighted the importance of carefully considering impacts on the environment, cultural values, recreation and local communities.
- Trust and transparency are important, with participants seeking continued engagement and more information about impacts, funding and implementation.

Next Steps

The study will now progress to Phase 4, where community feedback and further technical assessments will be used to identify a preferred combination of flood mitigation options.

Identifying a preferred combination of options will not mean construction can begin immediately. Further investigations, approvals, business case development and funding decisions will be required beyond the study to support future implementation.

Phase 4 will focus on:

- considering community feedback alongside further technical assessments
- identifying a preferred combination of flood mitigation options
- developing an adaptive, long-term pathway that considers short-term actions while planning for more complex infrastructure over time.
- sharing the preferred combination and how community feedback informed the study outcomes.

We remain committed to keeping the community informed about the progress of the study and will continue to provide key updates. You can [follow the Maribyrnong River catchment flood mitigation study](#) to keep informed as the study progresses.

Phase 3 at a glance

Together with the community, Melbourne Water is exploring long-term flood mitigation options to help reduce flood risk for the lower Maribyrnong River catchment. This study forms part of the work needed to identify, develop and implement flood mitigation options and combinations that will help to reduce flood risk while also reflecting community values as much as possible.

Phase 1 of the study focused on understanding what community members value most in their local environment and what they wanted to see considered as part of future flood mitigation investigations. This feedback informed the development of the Evaluation Criteria and helped shape the long-list of flood mitigation options.

Phase 2 focused on testing the Evaluation Criteria and exploring the long-list of flood mitigation options. Feedback collected from community members helped inform refinement of the Evaluation Criteria and the progression of options through the screening process and into the shortlist.

To learn more about the study, please visit the [Let's Talk website: letstalk.melbournewater.com.au/maribyrnong-mitigation](https://letstalk.melbournewater.com.au/maribyrnong-mitigation)

Phase 3 used feedback from earlier stages of the study to inform the development of a series of Example Combinations. Based on the review of the long list of options and evaluation criteria, these Example Combinations illustrate different approaches to reducing flood risk across the catchment.

Phase 3 community and stakeholder engagement took place from June to August 2026 and focused on gathering feedback on three example mitigation combinations, the shortlist of options and the trade-offs. Through this phase of engagement, we sought to:

- Understand how shortlisted options and combinations may affect different areas across the catchment.
- Explore how options work together to reduce flood risk across the lower catchment through the Example Combinations.
- Identify and discuss key trade-offs between different approaches.
- Understand what matters most when balancing outcomes such as safety, cost, timing, environmental outcomes and community impact.

Feedback collected during Phase 3 has provided valuable insights into community and stakeholder priorities, preferences and concerns regarding mitigation combinations.

This feedback will be considered alongside technical, environmental and economic assessments as the study continues to evaluate flood mitigation approaches.

This summary includes direct quotations from members of the community. Where these quotes have been used, this is indicated using quotation marks (" "), and are verbatim, quoted in exactly the same words as were used by the community and stakeholders.

To reflect the common themes identified during engagement, feedback has been grouped into key themes throughout this report.

All feedback included in this summary is anonymous.

Acknowledgement of community contributions

The study team and Melbourne Water would like to extend our appreciation to everyone who contributed feedback in Phase 3. Thank you for your time, participation and commitment to helping shape the future of flood mitigation in the Maribyrnong River catchment.

Melbourne Water would also like to acknowledge all key stakeholders, community groups, businesses and individuals who invested a significant amount of time into contributing to the study, including the submissions of feedback, data and research conducted separately to the study.

About the example combinations

Example Combination 1

Example Combination 1 includes only **non-structural mitigation options**. It has a lower overall cost compared with other Example Combinations, involves no major construction work, and focuses on preparedness, warning systems and improving building resilience.

Example Combination 1 does not reduce flood levels but helps reduce impacts of future flood events and improve safety through awareness and community programs.

Example Combination 2

Example Combination 2 includes **five mitigation options** that are a **mix of structural and non-structural options** and has a lower overall cost compared to Example Combination 3.

This combination delivers a higher level of flood risk reduction and up to

approximately 75% reduction in over-floor flooding in a 1% annual exceedance probability (AEP) in year 2100 (or 1,682 homes and businesses). It can also be staged or expanded over time.

Example Combination 3

Example Combination 3 includes **eight mitigation options** that is also a **mix of structural and non-structural options**. It achieves a greater reduction in the extent of flooding compared to Example Combination 2 at a higher cost.

This combination delivers the highest level of flood risk reduction and up to approximately 95% reduction in over-floor flooding in a 1% annual exceedance probability (AEP) in year 2100 (or 2,186 homes and businesses). It can be staged or expanded over time and includes additional non-structural options such as improvements to the flood warning system.

How we engaged

To gather feedback on the three example mitigation combinations, shortlist options and trade-offs, we delivered a mix of in-person and online engagement activities across the Maribyrnong River catchment. These activities provided opportunities for community members and stakeholders to learn about the combinations, discuss trade-offs and share what matters most when reducing flood risk.

Community in-person events



4

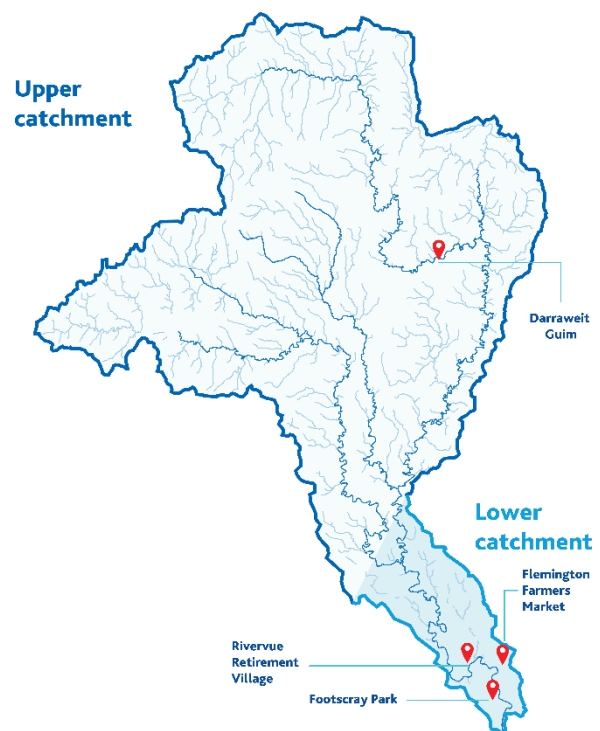
Events

140+

Attendees

We held four in-person community events across the catchment, creating opportunities for people to learn more about the mitigation combinations, ask questions and share their perspectives. Recognising that communities across the catchment may experience flooding differently, we held three events in the lower catchment and one event in the upper catchment to hear a broad range of views and local experiences.

The lower catchment events included a pop-up at the Flemington Farmers Market, a community barbecue at Footscray Park along the Maribyrnong River, and a drop-in session at Rivervue Retirement Village. We also held a drop-in session at Darraweit Guim in the upper catchment to ensure local perspectives and priorities were reflected in the feedback received.



At each event, participants were invited to explore information boards outlining the three Example Combinations and how the shortlisted options could work together to reduce flood risk across the catchment. Members of the study team, including technical specialists, were available to answer questions, provide information and listen to community feedback. These conversations helped us better understand the different priorities, concerns and lived experiences community members bring to discussions

about flood mitigation and flooding more broadly, while providing participants with an opportunity to engage directly with the team delivering the study. Holding such events throughout the catchment meant that we were able to have conversations with a wide variety of people, ranging from those who have been deeply affected by past flood events to those who were unaware of the study or that flood mitigation is an issue in their community.



Image 1 Attendees at community in-person event



Image 2 Attendees at community in-person event



Image 3 Attendees at community in-person event



Image 4 Attendees at community in-person event

Community Partnership Panels



3

Panels

41

Members

Three Community Partnership Panel sessions were held during Phase 3, building upon sessions held in Phase 1 and in Phase 2. Panel members drew on their local knowledge and lived experience to explore the example mitigation combinations in detail and discuss the opportunities, concerns and trade-offs associated with different approaches to reducing flood risk across the catchment. Feedback received during the Panels is detailed in the Phase 3 Community Partnership Panel Feedback Report, available on the Let's Talk website: letstalk.melbournewater.com.au/maribyrnong-cpp.



Image 5 Members sharing feedback at a Community Partnership Panel



Image 6 Members sharing feedback at a Community Partnership Panel

The Flood Mitigation Explorer



167
Contributions

1,680+
Views

The Flood Mitigation Explorer, a digital engagement tool, provided community members with an opportunity to explore the three Example Combinations online and share feedback at a time and place that suited them. Through the tool, participants could view flood extent and depth information for each Example Combination during flood events, learn more about how the shortlisted options worked together within each combination, and explore the trade-offs associated with different approaches to reducing flood risk across the catchment.

During Phase 3, the Flood Mitigation Explorer received 1,680+ views and generated 167 responses comprising 129 contributions across the three example flood mitigation combinations. Approximately half of all contributions related to Example Combination

3, and 38 responses relating to trade-offs. These helped us better understand how participants balanced considerations such as cost, timing and community impacts, like environmental and cultural impacts, when reviewing the Example Combinations.

These also helped us identify emerging themes across the Example Combinations and trade-offs. These included a preference for Example Combination 3 as the preferred option overall, revealed a range of views on the visual impacts of different mitigation measures, and demonstrated strong support for achieving the highest level of flood protection.

Individual feedback submissions



38

Submissions

In addition to surveys and online feedback tools, we received 10 submissions through the Let's Talk website and 28 email enquiries from community members and stakeholders. These submissions provided more detailed feedback on the Example Combinations, including specific local concerns, questions about how combinations may affect particular areas, and suggestions for future consideration.

Community members and local businesses submitted extensive documentation and research about mitigation in the upper catchment, impacts to local businesses and property development as well as concerns around specific mitigation options including retarding basins and levees. The submissions provided detailed information, local knowledge and perspectives regarding flood mitigation approaches. They also highlight the importance of providing opportunities for detailed feedback, especially to those in the community, showing and sharing their knowledge and deep interest in the flood risk mitigation study.

Let's Talk website



5,870+

Views

2,800+

Downloads

The Let's Talk website continued to be a key source of information during Phase 3. Community members could access information about the three Example Combinations, download technical and engagement materials, fact sheets, explore digital engagement platforms and learn about upcoming engagement opportunities. Throughout the engagement period there were more than 2,800 downloads of materials which included flood extent maps and the Shortlist Handbook.

Small group discussions



7

Meetings

25+

Attendees

We met with government Departments, community groups, landowners and other stakeholders to understand specific interests, local considerations and perspectives on the Example Combinations and study more broadly. These conversations provided an opportunity to hear more targeted feedback from groups with specific local knowledge, responsibilities or concerns related to flood risk management. Stakeholders included:

- The Australian Government Department of Defence
- The Kensington Association
- Maribyrnong Catchment Resilience Association
- Maribyrnong Neighbourhood Flood Network
- Maribyrnong Rivers and Waterways Association
- Perri Projects
- Rivervue Retirement Village Residents Committee

These discussions helped us better understand the diverse ways communities and organisations may be affected by the Example Combinations, as well as the opportunities and challenges they see in different approaches. By listening to these perspectives, we gained a deeper understanding of the specific issues that matter to various stakeholders in the catchment, and the specific issues and concerns they would like considered as the study progresses.

Feedback forms (Darraweit Guim event)



3

Completed

Printed feedback forms were utilised at the upper catchment event in Darraweit Guim which gave residents an opportunity to sit down and provide written feedback in person. Several attendees elected to provide verbal feedback instead of using the feedback form.

Social media



1.1 million +

Impressions

A paid targeted social media campaign helped raise awareness of Phase 3 engagement activities and encouraged community members to learn about the Example Combinations and provide feedback. The campaign reached a wide audience across the catchment, generating more than 1.1 million impressions, or the number of times campaign content was displayed on users' screens.



Image 7 Social media campaign



Image 8 Social media campaign

Newsletter



13,000 +

Homes and businesses in the lower and upper catchments

In Phase 3, around 13,000 homes and businesses received a newsletter from us raising awareness about the study and all other flood mitigation programs promoting the various opportunities to provide feedback or to attend community engagement events. The newsletter was delivered to floodplain communities in: Kensington, West Melbourne, Maribyrnong, Ascot Chase and Avondale Heights.



Image 9 Newsletter sent to community members promoting Phase 3 engagement

What we asked

Phase 3 engagement focused on understanding community and stakeholder perspectives on three Example Combinations of mitigation options and the trade-offs associated with different approaches to reducing flood risk across the Lower Maribyrnong River catchment.

Community members were invited to explore each Example Combination and consider how shortlisted options worked together to reduce flood risk across the catchment. We sought feedback on the perceived strengths, concerns and opportunities associated with each combination, including potential impacts on local communities, the environment, cultural heritage and more broadly cost, speed and scale of intervention.

We also asked participants to reflect on the balance between flood protection and changes to local areas. This included exploring what types of changes people may or may not be willing to accept in exchange for reduced flood risk, as well as their views on infrastructure such as levees and retarding basins and how these measures will best fit into local communities. Flood risk is the combined likelihood of a flood occurring and the consequences if it does occur, including impacts on people, homes, infrastructure, the environment and the economy.

Recognising that there is no single solution to flood mitigation, we asked participants to share their views on a range of trade-offs. This included balancing:

- Flood protection and local amenity
- Local impacts and wider catchment benefits
- Cost and flood risk reduction
- Speed of delivery and long-term protection, and
- The scale of intervention and the level of change to local areas.

We also sought feedback on cost, funding and delivery timeframes, including whether the community preferred earlier implementation of mitigation measures or greater long-term flood protection that may take longer to deliver.

Throughout Phase 3, we encouraged community members to share their priorities, concerns and local knowledge to help us better understand what matters most to communities when evaluating different flood mitigation approaches.

What we heard

Phase 3 community engagement provided valuable insights into how community members and stakeholders view the three Example Combinations and the trade-offs associated with reducing flood risk across the Maribyrnong River catchment. While perspectives varied across different communities and locations, feedback highlighted several common themes relating to flood protection, community impacts, cost, delivery and long-term resilience.

Impacts of the October 2022 flood event

Throughout Phase 3, many participants reflected on the October 2022 flood event and the uncertainty that can come with living with flood risk. We heard concerns relating not only to flooding, but also to broader issues such as insurance, property values, community wellbeing, future growth, environmental outcomes and long-term water

management. These perspectives reinforced the complexity of identifying flood mitigation solutions that balance community, environmental, economic and technical considerations across the catchment.

Example Combination 1

Overall, feedback received during Phase 3 participants generally viewed Example Combination 1 as an important foundation for improving flood preparedness and resilience, but most did not see it as a complete flood mitigation solution. Improved flood warnings, agency and community preparedness, and flood-resilient homes were widely supported, and many participants felt these actions should be implemented regardless of which combination progresses.

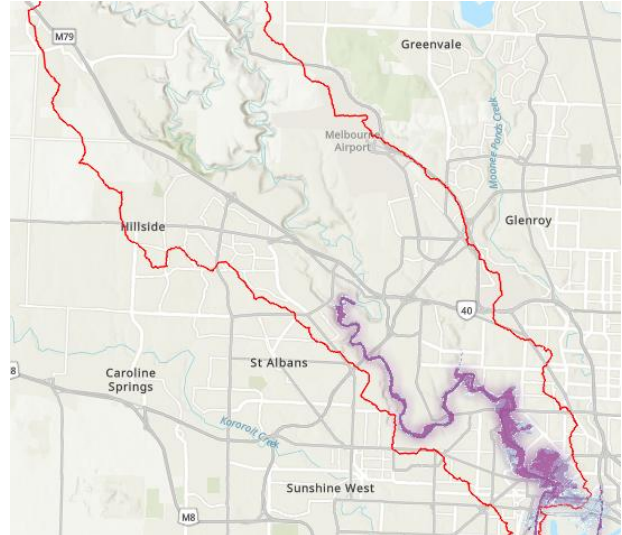


Image 10 Example Combination 1

However, many participants expressed concern that the combination does not reduce flood levels or protect properties from flooding. A common sentiment was that these measures place too much responsibility on individual residents and should complement, rather than replace, structural flood mitigation measures. Questions were also raised about funding, equity and the practicality of retrofitting existing homes, particularly in areas with attached housing or vulnerable residents.

Key takeaways

- Strong support for improved flood warnings and preparedness.
- Viewed as a necessary baseline or "starting point".
- There was limited confidence in flood warning as a standalone, non-structural option, as it was not seen as reducing the extent of over-floor flooding.
- Concerns about placing responsibility on individual homeowners and residents.
- Questions about funding and implementation of flood-resilient homes.

Comment snapshot

"They offer safety benefits without further damaging the river. They can be implemented in the short term."

"Low cost, quick to implement, long term / sustainable option."

"This option essentially kicks the can down the road and asks residents to accept flooding rather than prevent it."

"Combination 1 protects zero homes from over-floor flooding, it changes how we experience a flood, not the flood itself."

"Flood warnings and emergency preparedness aren't a mitigation strategy, they're what government is supposed to be doing regardless. Full stop. Calling this a 'combination' implies it's a real choice. It isn't, it reduces flooding by nothing. Residents here were let down by the people responsible for planning and managing flood risk"

"Combination 1 asks residents to accept ongoing flood risk in exchange for avoiding any physical changes to the local area. That is not a trade-off I accept."

Example Combination 2

Feedback received from participants during Phase 3 on Example Combination 2 was generally positive. Many participants viewed it as the first combination that delivers reductions in flood levels by including a mix of structural and non-structural measures. The inclusion of retarding basins and levees was commonly seen as providing tangible protection benefits while maintaining a balance between cost and outcomes.

Participants frequently described Combination 2 as a practical or achievable option. However, concerns were raised about the level of residual flood risk that remains and whether it would provide adequate protection for all communities. The Maribyrnong Township

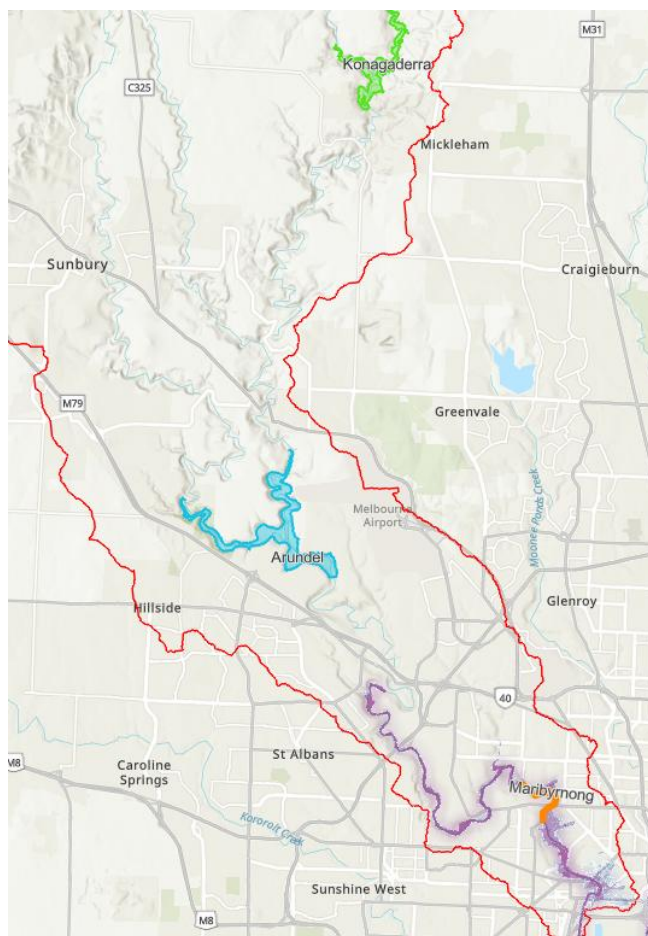


Image 11 Example Combination 2

levee and Arundel Retarding Basin generated significant discussion, particularly in relation to environmental impacts, visual amenity, river access, cultural values considerations and potential impacts on surrounding communities.

Key takeaways

- Seen as a meaningful step towards reducing flood risk.
- Strong support for upstream storage and flood reduction measures.
- Viewed by many as a balanced approach between cost and benefits.
- Concerns about residual flood risk and local impacts.
- Strong interest in understanding the detailed impacts of levees and retarding basins.
- Some participants did not support larger mitigation options, such as levees and retarding basins, due to perceived local impacts.

Comment snapshot

"It's a solid middle-ground option, roughly 75% reduction in over-floor flooding and 1,682 properties protected."

"It offers a meaningful step up in protection at a lower cost and complexity than Combination 3."

"This feels like a half-baked version of Combination 3."

"The levees could create more flooding in other areas which is just shifting the problem around."

"Far better than 'combination' one (in that it is actually protecting homes). Looks more realistic than combination three cost wise"

"Combination 2 is better than Combination 1, but better than a disgrace is not the standard this community deserves."

"Combination 2 feels like a Temu version of Combination 3."

"The trade-offs across the combinations is upstream land-use change buying downstream urban protection, and that is the right direction."

Example Combination 3

Among participants who provided feedback in Phase 3, Example Combination 3 attracted comparative stronger support across many of the different engagement activities during Phase 3. It was often described as the most comprehensive approach and the Example Combination most likely to deliver meaningful long-term reductions in flood risk across the catchment. Many people expressed a preference for pursuing the highest level of protection, particularly given the long-term impacts flooding can have on community wellbeing, homes and businesses.

At the same time, participants recognised that Example Combination 3 would be the most complex and costly option to deliver. Concerns focused on delivery timeframes, funding, planning approvals, environmental impacts and the potential for infrastructure to affect local communities. Many respondents stressed the importance of staging, ensuring early actions are delivered while maintaining a commitment to the longer-term vision.

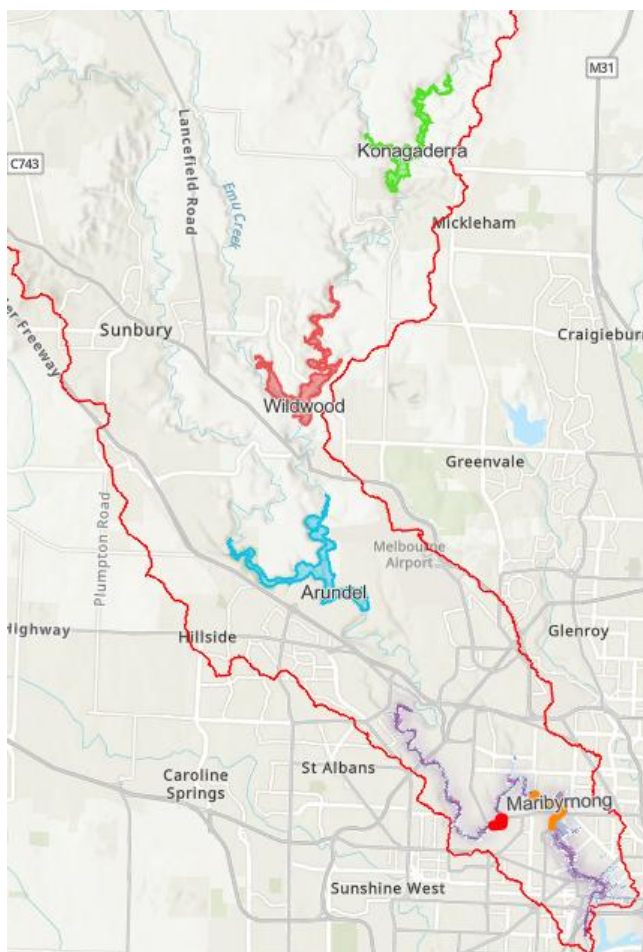


Image 13 Example Combination 3

Key takeaways

- Among the highest levels of support for reducing flood risk.
- Strong support for mitigation options both in the upper and lower catchment to reduce flood risk downstream
- Concerns about cost, complexity and delivery timeframes.
- Strong desire for staged implementation and clear commitment to delivery.

Comment snapshot

"This is my preferred option. It delivers by far the greatest reduction in flood risk and protects the most properties."

"Combination 3 offers the strongest protection because it combines substantial structural works with improved warnings and preparedness."

"The option articulates what we don't want. Yes it protects more houses but the cost and negative impacts are colossal."

"The levee is a disaster, will kill the community and the connection to the river."

"It will prevent ongoing anxieties about living in a flood plain and look forward to living day to day."

"The multi-layered approach combining retarding basins and levees creates redundancy and resilience. It actually prevents flooding rather than preparing residents to accept it."



Trade-offs

Among participants who provided feedback, there was a recognition that reducing flood risk requires balancing competing priorities. Feedback received during Phase 3 on trade-offs, both in person and online, indicated a preference for options that deliver greater flood protection, even where this involved higher costs, larger-scale infrastructure, longer delivery timeframes or changes to local areas. On the other hand, there was also some sentiment that queried the cost of flood mitigation investment and their impacts and whether major mitigation works should proceed at all.

Flood protection vs local amenity: Many contributors indicated they would accept changes to views, access and local character if it resulted in greater flood protection, provided mitigation measures were thoughtfully designed and integrated into the surrounding environment. Other participants raised concerns about the potential impact of some mitigation measures on local amenity, particularly levees, which were perceived as affecting river access and views.

Comment snapshot

"As long as it's well designed and sympathetic to the local area, I'm okay with a higher levee."

"I do not believe these levee options strike the right balance between flood protection and preserving the amenity of the Maribyrnong River corridor"

"I would accept visible local changes. Levees and retarding basins are preferable to repeated flood damage."

Local impacts vs wider catchment benefits: Contributors generally supported options that delivered broader flood risk reduction across the lower catchment, while emphasising the importance of understanding, minimising and managing impacts on communities directly affected by mitigation measures. It was recognised that most feedback was received from participants living in the lower catchment, despite engagement activities being undertaken across the catchment, including an event in Darraweit Guim. As a result, participants were often willing to accept impacts in the upper catchment areas where these were seen as necessary to achieve greater flood risk reduction downstream, provided those impacts did not adversely affect homes, livelihoods or other significant community values.

Comment snapshot

"Happy with impacts in the upper catchment for benefits to the lower catchment, as long as it's not people's houses or livelihoods."

Higher cost vs remaining flood risk: Many participants considered greater flood protection to be worth the additional investment, particularly when reflecting on the long-term financial, social and emotional impacts of flooding. There was also strong support for seeking State and Commonwealth funding contributions. Contrarily, some participants did express whether it was worthwhile investing at all when looking at wider priorities across the state more broadly.

Comment snapshot

"If you're going to do it, do it properly."

"Cost is a false economy."

Speed of delivery vs level of protection: This attracted the strongest preference across all the trade-offs, with participants generally favouring greater long-term flood protection over faster delivery. Many also supported a staged approach that delivers immediate actions while progressing larger infrastructure over time.

Comment snapshot

"Do what you can do fast and upgrade later."

"Needs to be staged."

"Some quick wins, but needs ultimate progression."

Scale of intervention vs level of change: Feedback from participants was generally supportive of larger-scale interventions where these deliver meaningful reductions in flood risk. Support was comparatively stronger where the benefits could be clearly demonstrated and where the impacts can be carefully managed through planning and design. Some participants did not support large-scale infrastructure such as levees and retarding basins due to the local impacts, including those to businesses along the Maribyrnong river as well as to the environment and recreational users on and along the river.

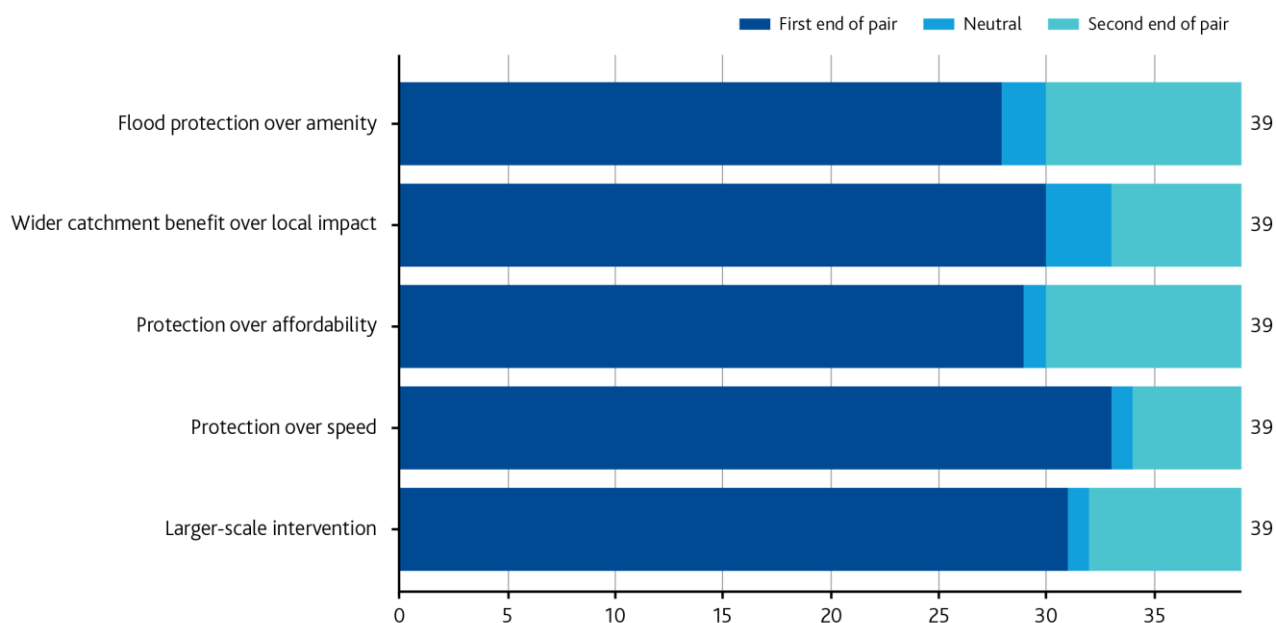
Comment snapshot

"Large scale doesn't have to affect visual amenity."

"Fan of large-scale, go grand."

"I suspect that the Arundel Retarding Basin is going to have a huge impact on the wildlife and geography"

Flood mitigation explorer trade-off exercise data



Summary from Phase 3 engagement

Different views across the catchment

While no single perspective represented all community members, some clear patterns emerged throughout Phase 3:

- Feedback reflected the diverse experiences, priorities and flood risk concerns that exist across the Maribyrnong River catchment, with community members often assessing mitigation options through the lens of their local circumstances including where they live, lived experience of flooding and potential impacts on their area. This included a wide range of views, ranging from questions about whether flooding should be mitigated at all through to strong calls for flood mitigation action and investment to be prioritised.
- Many highly engaged participants who have participated throughout multiple phases of the study supported more comprehensive flood mitigation approaches and often expressed a preference for Example Combination 3.
- Some participants questioned the overall cost of flood mitigation and whether major mitigation works should proceed at all.

- Others remained concerned about potential impacts on local amenity, the environment, recreation areas and community character, particularly where mitigation infrastructure may alter familiar places.
- Many participants supported flood mitigation in principle but wanted greater confidence that impacts would be carefully assessed, transparently communicated and appropriately managed.
- Feedback varied considerably on specific issues including cost-benefit outcomes, specific areas such as Kensington Banks, the role of retarding basins and levees, the study methodology and the balance between flood protection and local impacts.

The feedback received demonstrates that communities across the catchment hold a broad range of perspectives informed mostly by where they live, all of which contributes to understanding the opportunities, challenges and trade-offs associated with reducing flood risk.

Protecting people and places remains a key priority

Across all engagement activities, participants consistently identified reducing flood risk and protecting people, homes, businesses and community assets as the most important outcome. Many indicated they were willing to accept trade-offs such as higher costs, larger infrastructure and longer delivery timeframes if it resulted in meaningful and lasting reductions in flood risk.

Comment snapshot

"Higher long-term protection is more important. Do it once and do it right."

"This is my preferred option (combination 3). It delivers by far the greatest reduction in flood risk and protects the most properties."

Short-term preparedness and long-term mitigation both matter

Participants strongly supported improvements to flood warnings, preparedness and resilience measures, but generally did not see these as a substitute for physical flood mitigation works. Many people supported a staged approach that delivers immediate actions while continuing to progress longer-term mitigation measures that provide greater flood protection.

Comment snapshot

"Short-term and long-term measures should proceed together... these measures cannot replace infrastructure that reduces flood levels and changes flood behaviour across the catchment."

"Both, in sequence and Combination 1 is only defensible as the fast first stage... faster delivery must not substitute for long-term protection."

Communities want confidence that impacts will be understood and managed

Many participants acknowledged that reducing flood risk may require significant changes in some locations. While there was broad support for mitigation measures such as the Arundel, Konagaderra and Wildwood retarding basins, feedback highlighted ongoing questions about potential impacts on environmental values, cultural values, surrounding land uses and robustness of research into these options.

Similarly, the levees generated discussion about visual amenity, access to the river, recreation and potential impacts on nearby communities. Participants also raised questions about the practicality, affordability and effectiveness of flood-resilient homes and property flood-proofing measures. Across Phase 3 engagement, many participants requested that the impacts, benefits and trade-offs associated with these options be carefully assessed, transparently communicated and appropriately managed as the study progresses.

Comment snapshot

"Change needs to happen in order to protect us. Not everyone is going to agree but anyone that went through 2022 can't do it again."

"It's difficult to tell from the examples presented as to how they deliver value versus how they may detract (e.g. visual amenity). This is something that the project needs to improve on before the community can give reliable feedback on."

Local impacts and catchment-wide benefits both matter

Participants recognised the importance of reducing flood risk across the catchment but wanted assurance that communities experiencing the impacts of mitigation measures would be engaged, listened to and supported. Feedback highlighted the importance of a detailed understanding of local impacts alongside broader catchment benefits.

The majority of participants in Phase 3 engagement were residents of the lower catchment. Engagement in the upper catchment highlighted that these community members must continue to be engaged with so that their interests are supported throughout the study. Notably, a key concern for residents of Darraweit Guim was that their community also wanted to see benefits from flood mitigation in the area.

Comment snapshot

"Upstream, basin footprints sit on working farms: fairness means proper compensation and basins designed as dry, usable land between floods."

"Residents in the lower catchment area should not be disadvantaged for the urban sprawl that's been allowed to happen in the upper catchment area."

"The flood mitigation options that would have greatly reduced the flooding in the township of Darraweit Guim have been removed."

Trust, transparency and confidence are important

Participants consistently sought greater clarity on flood modelling, local impacts, funding, timeframes and decision-making. Participants also emphasised the importance of clear, transparent communication as the study progresses, and valued opportunities for community involvement in future stages of planning and design.

Comment snapshot

"Residents have engaged in good faith across multiple rounds of consultation. That good faith should be matched by a genuine commitment to delivering the protection Combination 3 promises"

"The purpose of this process is not just to produce a study. It is to produce action."

Environmental and Cultural values remain relevant

Environmental considerations featured throughout Phase 3 engagement, particularly in discussions about retarding basins, river health, biodiversity and cultural values. There were participants that opposed retarding basins, arguing that environmental costs and impacts to cultural values could outweigh the flood mitigation benefits. In particular, Arundel retarding basin emerged as the most controversial location. Equally, many participants were also willing to accept environmental trade-offs where flood protection benefits were significant.

Furthermore, some participants questioned whether further engineering of the river was the right approach, suggesting communities should adapt to the natural floodplains rather than reshaping them. There was strong sentiment that sought reassurance that impacts and feasibility would be thoroughly assessed and that opportunities to minimise impacts or deliver broader environmental, cultural values and land use benefits/ impacts would be explored.

Comment snapshot

"I'd prefer to see more information shared on the values on the river and the balance between protecting the environment and flood protection."

"I am incredibly concerned that these are being presented as a viable option without any information about the natural and cultural values that would be impacted."

Recognition of previous flood studies and specialists' contributions

A number of flood specialists who have previously undertaken studies and technical work across the catchment participated in discussions during Phase 3 engagement. Several also attended the community event at the Flemington Farmers Market, where they shared valuable insights, technical know-how and additional information relevant to the study.

Their previous studies and technical work have helped inform parts of the current study and provide an important foundation for understanding flood behaviour and risk across the catchment.

We acknowledge and thank the specialists for their contributions, their continued interest in the study, and the time they have taken to share their knowledge, experience and additional information through the Phase 3 engagement process.



Engagement process feedback

Phase 3 involved asking community members for feedback about the engagement process.

Feedback collected via the engagement process survey at the community events:

68%

of respondents rated the **communications materials at the events** as **easy** or **very easy** to understand

73%

of respondents rated their **overall experience at the events** as **good** or **excellent**

Key themes throughout engagement

Participants responded positively to the opportunity to discuss the study directly with Melbourne Water and the project team. Feedback submitted in person, via email, online and feedback forms suggests future engagement would benefit from more localised information, stronger visualisation of flood impacts and mitigation measures, and continued opportunities for community involvement and information sharing as the study progresses and future stages towards implementation.

Feedback received showed the community appreciated the detailed factsheets and maps being made available at events and the opportunity to receive and view detailed technical information. While some participants preferred very detailed information being made available, feedback also highlighted the importance to maintain accessible information about the study.

Comment snapshot

"Great that you are here in the local community sharing the information."

"Great to be heard and sit with specific people to get positive outcomes."

"Need more detail about level of protection."

"Having maps and proposals to clearly show the community attendees Melbourne Water's intentions."

"Your ability to make highly technical material accessible, while ensuring participants have a genuine opportunity to test the evidence and express their views, has been an important strength of the process"

Looking ahead to Phase 4

Feedback from Phase 3 engagement will help us to understand community preferences in trade-offs and will help influence how we develop the preferred combination of flood mitigation options during Phase 4 of the study.

The study will now progress to Phase 4, this will involve:

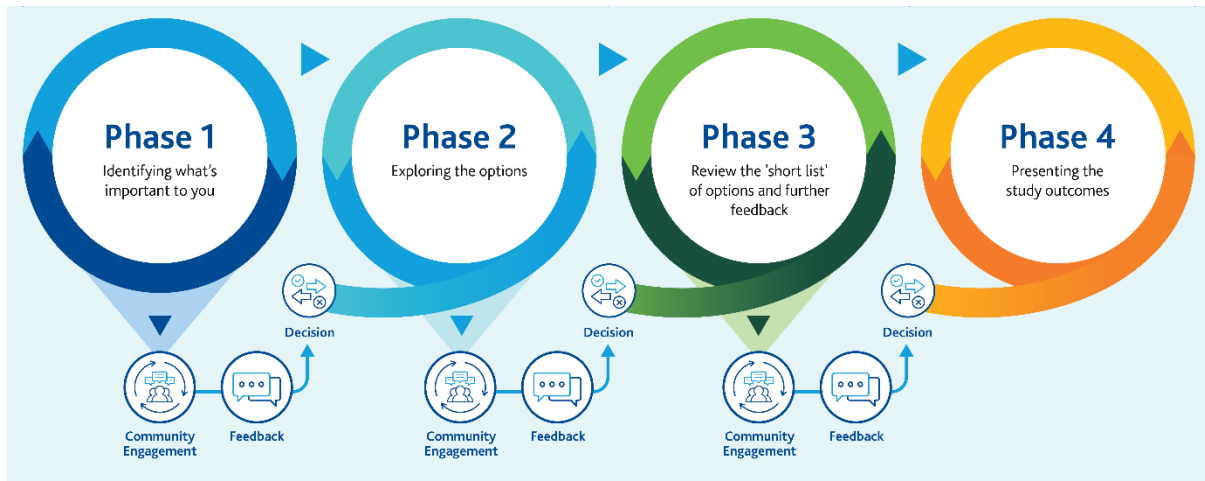
- considering community feedback alongside further technical assessments
- identifying a preferred combination of flood mitigation options
- developing an adaptive, long-term implementation pathway
- outlining how options could be progressively implemented over time
- sharing the preferred combination, study findings and how community feedback informed study outcomes.

During Phase 4, Melbourne Water will release the study findings, including a summary of what we heard throughout community engagement and how community feedback informed decision-making.

Beyond Phase 4, work will continue through further technical and feasibility investigations, including cultural values, environmental and geotechnical assessments, government approvals and business case development.

Identifying a preferred combination of flood mitigation options will not mean construction can begin immediately, as further investigation, approvals, funding decisions and planning will be required before implementation can proceed.

While these activities extend beyond the study itself, they form an important part of the broader journey towards identifying, developing and implementing long-term flood mitigation options.



Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the study so far. Your feedback continues to play an important role in helping shape the future approach to reducing flood risk across the Maribyrnong River catchment.

We will continue to keep community members and stakeholders updated via the Let's Talk website at letstalk.melbournewater.com.au/maribyrnong-mitigation. Please select 'follow' at the top of the page to be kept up-to-date on the progress of this project.

How did we do?

We would very much appreciate any feedback you have for us about the engagement process for Phase 3 of the study. Please complete our [engagement survey](#) to help us understand any areas for improvement. The survey is available on the Let's Talk website: letstalk.melbournewater.com.au/phase-3-engagement-feedback-survey.

Contact us

To speak with the team, please call 131 722 or email enquiry@melbournewater.com.au