

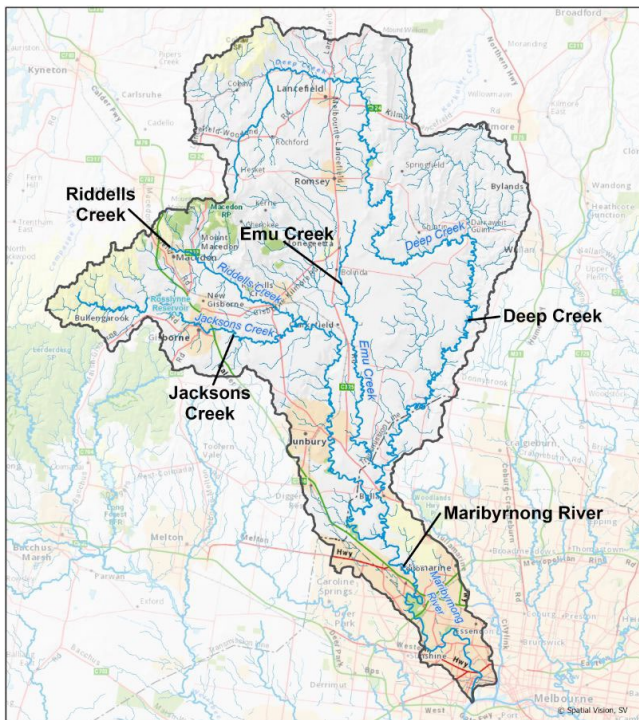
Fact Sheet

Maribyrnong River Flood Event: What we know so far

January 2023

Maribyrnong River catchment

The Deep Creek and Jacksons Creek catchments that feed into the Maribyrnong River start up at the Macedon Ranges, draining south from the Great Dividing Range.



The shape of the catchment affects flooding. It is wide in the upstream areas, encompassing areas like Lancefield North, Mt Macedon and Darraweit, yet from Sunbury the catchment becomes narrower.

Due to its shape, the area north of Sunbury has the biggest influence on flow behaviours in the Maribyrnong River. The travel time of water through the catchment means longer rainfall events like the one experienced on 13-14 October 2022 tend to have the highest peak flows in downstream areas.

Unprecedented wet weather conditions

The rainfall that occurred in October 2022 across Victoria was unprecedented. It was the wettest month in Victoria ever recorded since records began in 1900.

The Maribyrnong River flood event that occurred on 14 October 2022 followed this unprecedented rainfall and was one of the largest floods ever on record,

not just for the Maribyrnong River but also the biggest event for Deep Creek which is the largest tributary of the Maribyrnong River.

The key drivers for the flooding were the significant and widespread rainfall across the catchment lasting for 48 hours, coupled with an already very wet catchment. Melbourne is now experiencing a wet weather pattern, known as La Niña, for a third consecutive year. This is just the fourth time since records began that La Niña has lasted for 3 consecutive years in a row.

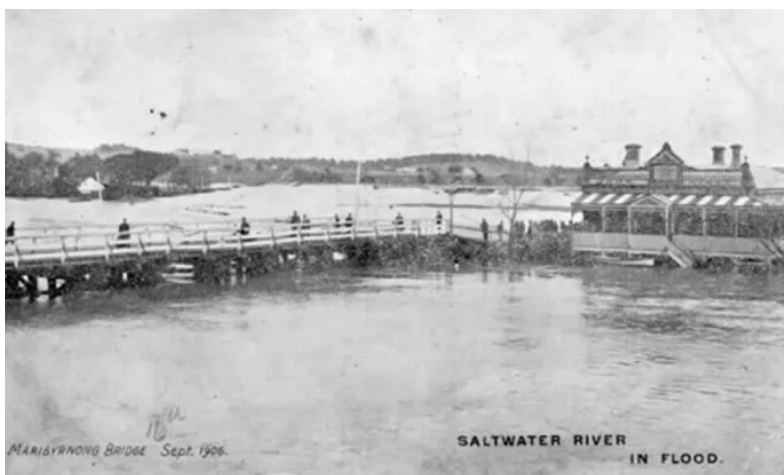
La Niña increases the chances of above-average rainfall for northern and eastern Australia during spring and summer, including significant flooding events such as those experienced in October.

Due to the saturation of the already very wet catchment, heavy rainfall is less likely to be absorbed into the land and so increased flows enter the creeks and river systems, increasing the risk of riverine flooding

History of Maribyrnong River flooding

The Maribyrnong area has a history of widespread flooding. Since 1871, there have been 28 recorded floods in the Maribyrnong area, and historically, we have seen large floods occur approximately every 10-20 years.

The highest recorded flood affecting the Maribyrnong floodplain was in September 1906, yet it was the 1974 flood that caused the most damage to homes, industries and public utilities in the Maribyrnong area.



1906 Saltwater [later Maribyrnong] River in flood – Maribyrnong Bridge.
Source: Picture Victoria, courtesy of Footscray Historical Society



1974 Maribyrnong River in flood – 16 May 1974; flooded area near Flemington Racecourse.
Source: Picture Victoria, courtesy of Footscray Historical Society

The October 2022 flood was the highest on the Maribyrnong River in more than 100 years. Flows measured for Deep Creek, a tributary of the Maribyrnong, were the highest ever on record.

Some of the previous major Maribyrnong River floods that are comparable in height to this most recent flood event include:

Sept 1906	The highest flood on record affecting the Maribyrnong floodplain hits Footscray and Kensington hard, with waters recorded at 4.5 metres.
Sept 1916	Second highest recorded flooding for the Maribyrnong township, at 4.26 metres.
Oct 2022	The most recent flood event, now the third highest on record measured at 4.22 metres, bigger than the 1974 flood.
May 1974	Previously the 1974 flood was the third highest on record, but caused the most damage to properties due to the growth of Melbourne as a city.
Sept 1993	Major flooding results in Anglers Tavern lounge under nearly 2 metres of water. River rose to 3.3m at Maribyrnong.

Maribyrnong River Flood Review

An independent review of the Maribyrnong River flood event has commenced.

Learn more about the Maribyrnong River Flood Review at

<https://yoursay.melbournewater.com.au/maribyrnong-river-flood-review>

Keep up to date with what's happening

For more information about this project or our other activities please email

maribyrnongriver.floodreview@melbournewater.com.au

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