

Resilient Valley, Resilient Communities **Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley** **Flood Risk Management Strategy**

Frequently asked questions

Managing the flood risk

What is the Flood Strategy?

The Flood Strategy is a long-term plan for the NSW Government, local councils, businesses and the community working together to manage the risk posed by regional floods in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley.

No simple solution or single option can address all the flood risk in the valley. The Flood Strategy comprises an integrated mix of infrastructure and non-infrastructure actions. Phase One actions are being implemented over four years (2016-2020).

What area does the Flood Strategy cover?

The Flood Strategy covers the Nepean and Hawkesbury river floodplains from Bents Basin near Wallacia to the Brooklyn Bridge, taking in approximately 425 square kilometres. The Valley falls mainly within four local government areas in Western Sydney – Penrith City, Hawkesbury City, The Hills Shire and Blacktown City.

What options to manage floods were considered in developing the Flood Strategy?

Flood experts investigated a broad range of options in detail over four years, including:

- operating Warragamba Dam differently
- lowering the full supply level of the dam
- raising the dam by up to 30 metres to provide airspace
- dredging the Hawkesbury River
- creating river diversion channels
- building local levees
- major upgrades to evacuation roads.

The range of key outcomes included in the Flood Strategy are a combination of infrastructure, policy and other initiatives required to reduce flood risk by:

- changing the probability of different sized floods reaching the valley
- reducing the exposure of people in the valley to flood risk
- reducing the exposure of property and other assets to floods
- increasing the resilience of communities exposed to floods.

More information on the options assessment is available in Chapter 3 of the Flood Strategy.

Who is implementing the Flood Strategy?

The Minister for Western Sydney, the Hon. Stuart Ayres, MP for Penrith, is the coordinating Minister for the Flood Strategy. Implementing the strategy is a whole of government exercise involving many agencies and local councils in consultation with the community. Infrastructure NSW (INSW) is responsible for managing and coordinating implementation of Phase One the Flood Strategy.

Local councils remain primarily responsible for managing flood prone land in their local government areas.

What progress is being made on implementing the Flood Strategy?

Work is progressing on a range of actions through until 2020, and includes:

- a comprehensive environmental impact statement (EIS) and detailed concept designs being prepared for the proposed Warragamba Dam Raising for flood mitigation
- new flood evacuation road signage, tested with floodplain residents, is scheduled to be rolled from late 2018 with a supporting communications program
- a region-wide flood study using up-to-date science and data, accessible flood maps and information will be available in early 2019 for decision makers and the community
- a range of communication and education initiatives with the NSW SES, local councils and other agencies to help build community resilience to floods are being rolled out through till 2020
- a major project with the Bureau of Meteorology will deliver new tools in 2019 to improve the accuracy and timeliness of rainfall and flood forecasting for the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley
- work is well-progressed on building a new evacuation model for the floodplain to support emergency planning and evacuation.

Updates on the Flood Strategy are available at www.insw.com/flood-strategy

Was climate change considered in developing the Flood Strategy?

Yes. Understanding future climatic conditions is an important part of the flood modelling to assess likely future flood risk. Floods were modelled under current and projected climate conditions through to 2090.

With projected climate change, the flood risk is predicted to increase.

What impact will the Flood Strategy have on property insurance?

In assessing flood insurance, insurers take account of how often a property is expected to flood, how severe the flooding may be, and how deep the flood can get.

Should the Warragamba Dam raising go ahead, any reductions in flood risk at each individual property will be considered by insurers and will typically result in reduced insurance premiums.

Where effective flood mitigation has been completed in other states, significant reductions in insurance premiums have been achieved.

Fact sheets about flood insurance prepared jointly by Floodplain Management Australia (FMA) and the Insurance Council of Australia can be found on the FMA website www.floods.org.au

How much will the Flood Strategy cost?

The NSW Government has allocated \$58 million over four years (2016-2020) to implement Phase One of the strategy. Thirty million dollars was allocated to undertake detailed concept designs, environmental assessments and preparation of the full business case for the proposed raising of Warragamba Dam to provide flood mitigation.

In addition, \$28 million was allocated to deliver the non-infrastructure actions. These include community engagement and education, new evacuation signage, improved flood forecasting, and integrating flood risk management with regional land use and evacuation planning.

The longer-term cost of implementing the strategy, including raising Warragamba Dam, is expected to be around \$800 million (2015 dollars).