



Resilient Valley, Resilient Communities

Hawkesbury–Nepean Valley Flood Risk Management Strategy



The Flood Strategy

Frequently asked questions

What is the Flood Strategy?

The Hawkesbury-Nepean Flood Risk Management 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 includes an integrated mix of infrastructure and non-infrastructure actions. Phase One has been implemented over five years (2016-2021). Ongoing implementation reflects that many of the initiatives are now integrated into the normal disaster risk management work of government.

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 around 500 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?

The strategy was developed over four years, with flood experts investigating a broad range of options in detail, 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 combine infrastructure, policy and other initiatives needed 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.

You can read more information about the options at www.infrastructure.nsw.gov.au/media/1976/taskforce-options-assessment-report-2019-v2.pdf

Who is implementing 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 managing and coordinating implementation of the Flood Strategy. Local councils remain primarily responsible for managing flood prone land in their local government areas.

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.

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

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.

What progress is being made on implementing the Flood Strategy?

Work is progressing on a range of actions through 2021, and includes:

- a comprehensive environmental impact statement (EIS) and public exhibition for the proposed Warragamba Dam Raising for flood mitigation
- more than 150 new flood evacuation road signs as part of a new system, tested with floodplain residents, which was rolled in late 2018
- a region-wide flood study using up-to-date science and data, accessible flood maps and information available for decision makers and the community
- a range of education and engagement initiatives with the NSW SES, local councils and other agencies to help build community resilience to floods continue to be rolled out
- a major project with the Bureau of Meteorology delivering new tools to improve the accuracy and timeliness of rainfall and flood forecasting for the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley
- building and implementing a new evacuation model for the floodplain to support land use, roads, and emergency planning.



For more information about flooding in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley, visit www.myfloodrisk.nsw.gov.au

For more information about the Flood Strategy, visit www.insw.com/flood-strategy