DRAFT Maribyrnong Community Flood Plan

A community-led approach to flood planning grounded in local context, community strengths and past learnings

March 2026





Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge that we are on traditional lands of the Kulin Nation. We offer our respect to the Elders of these traditional lands, and through them to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples past, present and emerging.

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Maribyrnong township community vision

"A connected, prepared and supportive community that thrives alongside flood risk, making Maribyrnong home."



Image: Gardening working bee in May 2024

"I want to leave this community in a better place for my children and the next generation."

"I want to make sure when people move into the area, they know what the risks are and what to do in a flood."

Why create a community plan?

"I want to ensure things are done better next time it floods..."

"I want the organisations involved in emergency management planning to understand the community context."

Introduction

In the early hours of 14 October 2022, the Maribyrnong River breached its banks, impacting over 500 properties, including homes, businesses and places of worship. The river peaked at a height of 4.22 metres, causing significant damage, widespread displacement and psycho-social impacts.

The insurance and building repair process has been lengthy, with some residents still unable to return home three years on. The community saw significant challenges, from insurance affordability, availability, poor claims handing, insufficient cash settlements and lengthy processes.

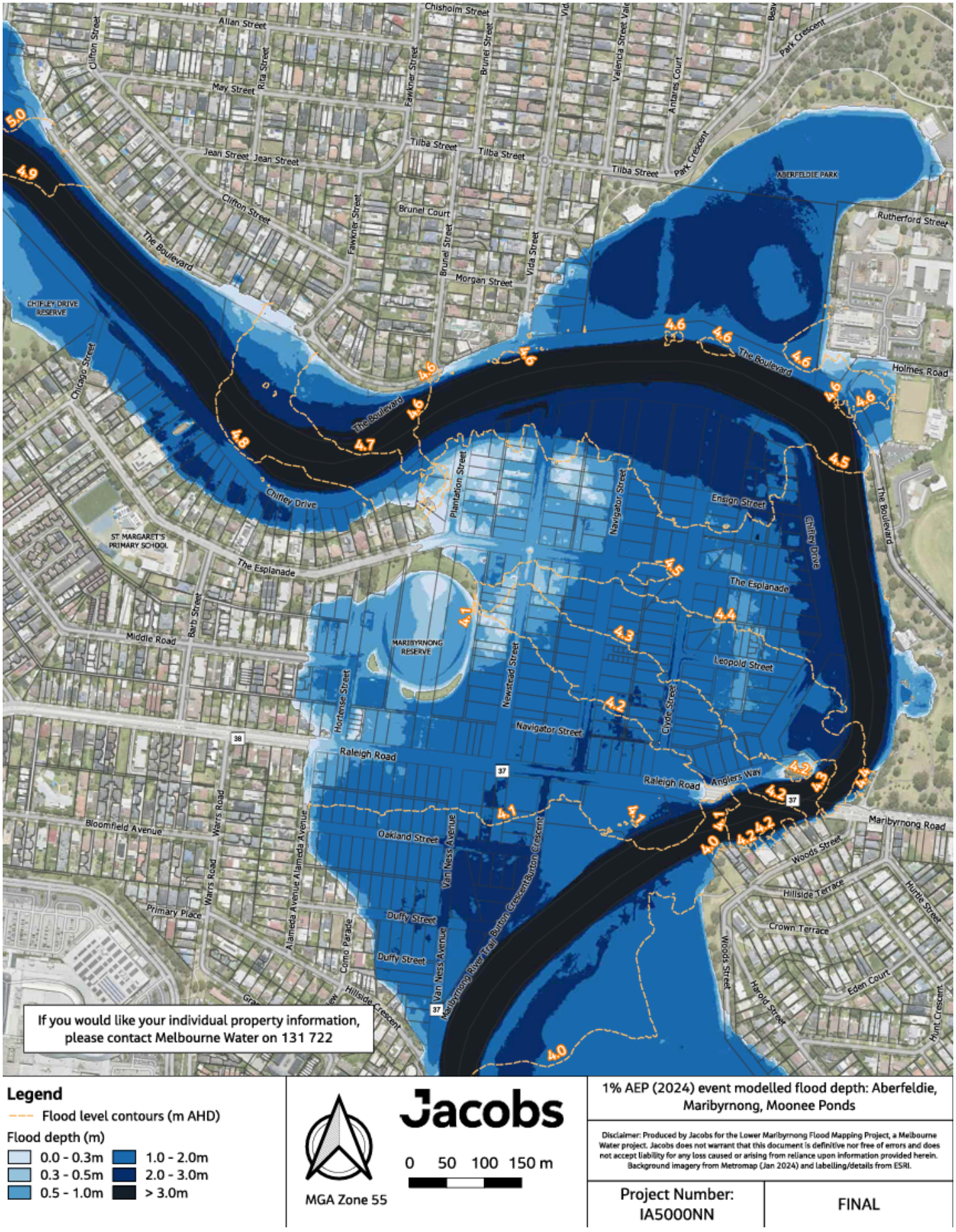
The mental health and wellbeing impacts of the flood have been widely reported, including through submissions to the Legislative Council Environment and Planning Committee Inquiry into the 2022 Flood Event in Victoria. Residents also describe challenges navigating available supports and system accessibility more broadly.

This plan was created by the community in response to the 2022 flood with support from Maribyrnong City Council and Monash University through the Flood to Flourish program. It serves as a plan to bring the local context to the forefront of emergency planning through the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC).

The Maribyrnong Community Flood Plan acknowledges that every single community is unique, and context matters in emergency planning.



Image: Maribyrnong River Flood October 2022



Source: Melbourne Water. (2024). Maribyrnong River flood level and depth maps: 1% AEP (2024) modelled flood extent [Map]. Jacobs.

Aim

The aim of this plan is to capture the community strengths, values and local context to bring community voices and needs to the forefront of emergency planning.

Developed by the Maribyrnong Neighbourhood Flood Network, this plan is community-owned and designed to equip emergency management agencies to better respond to local needs during future events. It is also designed to share localised preparedness information with the community and enable community participation in the emergency management system.

About this plan

The Maribyrnong Community Flood Plan was developed following a workshop held with the Maribyrnong community on 10 May 2025. The goal of the workshop was to capture the community's voices in flood planning, given that they are experts in their own local community, context, strengths and opportunities.

Following the workshop, Council worked closely with the Maribyrnong Neighbourhood Flood Network to develop the plan that reflects the local context and community strengths, while aligning with the shared responsibility model and Victorian Emergency Planning Framework.

Maribyrnong City Council will work with the community to update this Plan every three years. This aligns with the review timeframe for the Municipal Emergency Management Plan.

The plan will influence the Municipal Emergency Management Plan and associated sub-plans. As a Community Emergency Management Plan (CEMP), the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee are required to note this Plan in an emergency, effectively bringing local context to the forefront.

This is a community-owned document created with support from Maribyrnong City Council.

Principles

The Maribyrnong Community Flood Plan was created on the following principles:

- Collaboration
- Innovation
- Recognising complexity and uniqueness of communities
- Looking at strengths from within a community

Checklist and resources

The following pages contain steps to take before, during and after a flood.

These steps have been collated from the learnings of the Maribyrnong community.

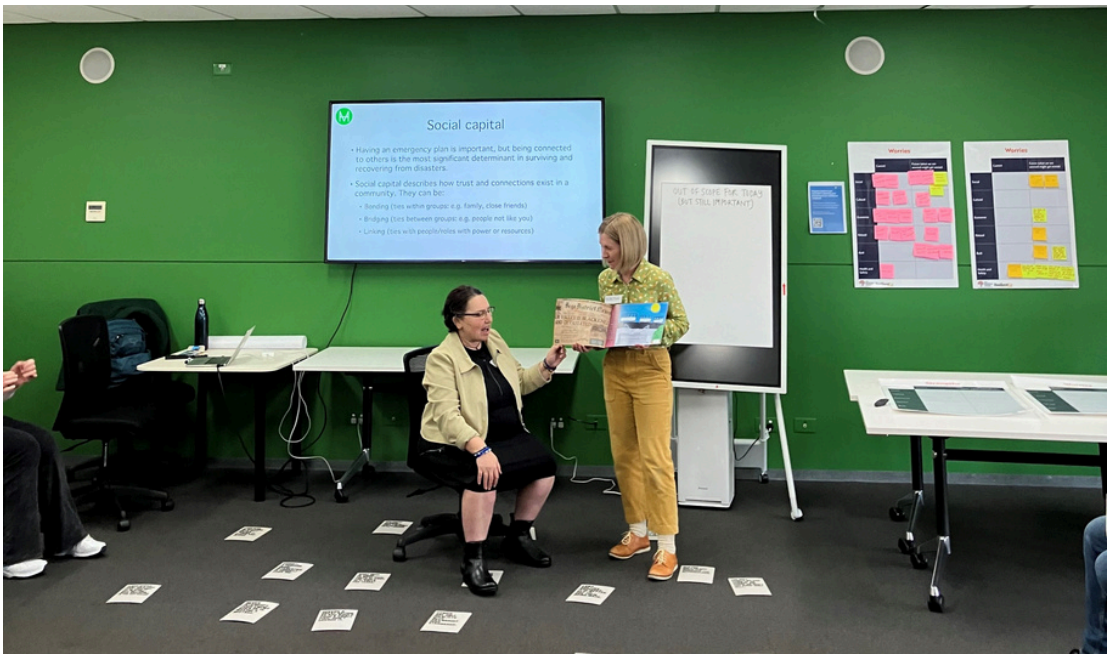
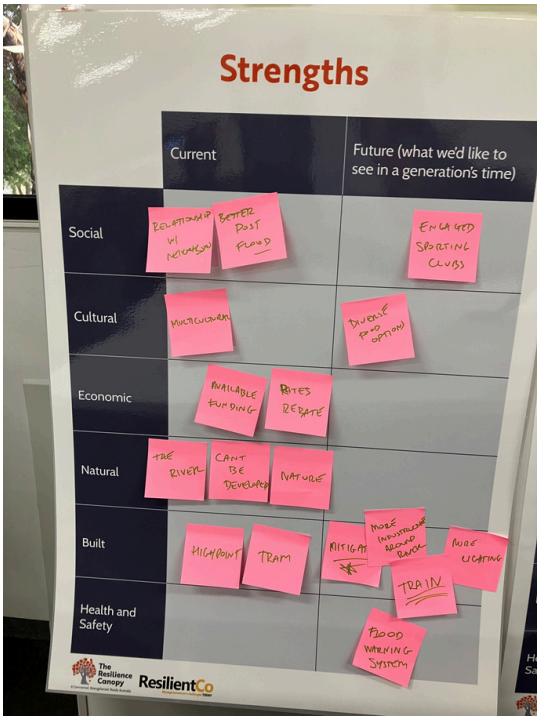


Image: Maribyrnong Community Strengths and Opportunities Workshop





Images: Community Strengths and Opportunities Workshop posters

Before flood

Know your risk, create a plan and put in place triggers to activate your plan

Checklist

- [ ] Review your Property Flood Risk Card for your risk
- [ ] Understand what each warning means (advice, watch and act and emergency warning)
- [ ] Download the VicEmergency app
- [ ] Check your insurance policy covers floods
- [ ] Use the Insurance Council of Australia's online calculator to estimate contents and rebuild costs
- [ ] Create a plan. Assign tasks to each household member applicable all hours of the day
- [ ] Select a safe meeting point and plan your evacuation route
- [ ] Prepare to be self-sufficient for at least 72 hours without power
- [ ] Get to know your neighbours

More information

- For local flood risk information, visit the Local Flood Guide
- For emergency warnings, download the VicEmergency app or tune into an emergency broadcaster (ABC Radio Melbourne 774 AM)
- For information on relief or recovery centres, visit the VicEmergency app or contact Council

Key contacts

- Life-threatening emergencies: 000
- VICSES Emergency Assistance: 132 500
- VicEmergency Hotline (Warnings/Info): 1800 226 226
- Road Closures/Hazards: 13 11 70

Local Flood Guide

VicEmergency site

During a flood

Listen to emergency services and activate your plan

Checklist

When Flood Advice is issued:

- [ ] Monitor warnings
- [ ] Alert your neighbours of warning advice
- [ ] Know your triggers and prepare to activate your plan

When a Warning (Watch and Act) is issued:

- [ ] Activate your plan
- [ ] Stay with family and friends

If you can:

- [ ] Lock doors, switch off electricity and gas and secure external doors before you leave
- [ ] Move cars to higher ground
- [ ] Lift valuables onto a high, secure surface
- [ ] Sandbag - including your toilet and drains

When an Emergency Warning is issued:

- [ ] If you have taken these steps, watch and wait
- [ ] If not, follow the directions of emergency services

Never drive, ride, or walk through floodwaters. Just 15 cm of water can float a car. Call 000 for life threatening emergencies. Remember, warnings are not always issued in order.

More information

- For emergency warnings, download the VicEmergency app or tune into an emergency broadcaster (ABC Radio Melbourne 774 AM) For
- information on relief or recovery centres, visit the VicEmergency app or contact Council

Key contacts

- Life-threatening emergencies: 000
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VicEmergency site

After a flood

Support your neighbours

Checklist

After a flood

- [ ] Do not return home until authorities declare it safe
- [ ] Check on your neighbours and networks
- [ ] Check if you are eligible for relief support using the contacts below or visit a Recovery Centre if one is set up

Insurance

- [ ] Contact your insurer to lodge a claim
- [ ] Request temporary accommodation through your insurance
- [ ] Begin clean-up after the make-safe
- [ ] Take photos of damage
- [ ] Do not throw away sentimental items that could be repaired unless they are a health risk
- [ ] Consider seeking independent reports from a geotechnical engineer, structural engineer, hygienist or other experts
- [ ] Check your scope of works provided by your insurer
- [ ] Do not proceed until you are happy with your scope of works and settlement offer
- [ ] Be aware of the risks of cash settlements

More information

For information on Emergency Relief Centres or Recovery Centres in your area:

- Visit VicEmergency: https://emergency.vic.gov.au/
- Visit the Council website: https://www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/

Contact Council:

- Phone: (03) 9688 0200 (during business hours)
- Phone (03) 9688 0200 (after hours)
- Email: email@maribyrnong.vic.gov.au

Council recovery page

VicEmergency site

Community resources

Resources include:

- VicEmergency (official warnings): https://emergency.vic.gov.au/respond/
- Maribyrnong Local Flood Guide: https://www.ses.vic.gov.au/plan-and-stay-safe/flood-guides/maribyrnong-city-council
- Understanding warnings: https://www.australianwarningsystem.com.au/
- Red Cross Emergency Preparedness Resources: https://www.redcross.org.au/prepare/
- Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness toolkit: https://collaborating4inclusion.org/pcep/pcep-tools/
- *Are you Covered?* Insurance information: https://www.vic.gov.au/are-you-covered
- Maribyrnong Insurance Project: https://www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/Residents/Emergency-Management/Flood-Recovery/Maribyrnong-Flood-Recovery/Maribyrnong-Insurance-Project
- Resilient retrofit guide: https://www.nema.gov.au/our-work/resilience/national-resilience-action-library/flood-resilient-guide-retrofitting-your-home
- River gauge monitoring tool created by a local Maribyrnong resident using publicly available river data: https://www.maribyrnongfloods.com/
- Contact Council to check if a Property Flood Risk Card (containing tailored risk information) has been issued for your property

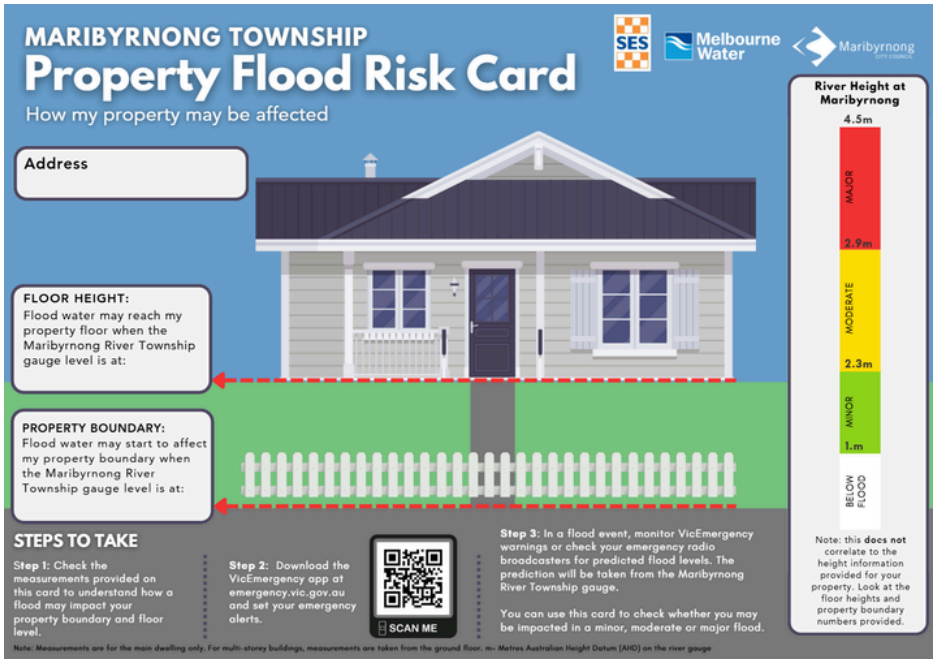


Image: Property Flood Risk Card (preparedness tool)

About the Maribyrnong community

Demographic information

Demographic snap shot: at-risk area of Maribyrnong

- 42% of people speak a language other than English
- 42% of people were born overseas
- 27% of properties are owned outright
- 23% of properties are owned with a mortgage
- 31% of properties are rented

This information is based on data from the 2021 census.

Community strengths and values

When asked what they love about living in Maribyrnong, the community characterised their suburb by proximity to the river and the lifestyle that comes with riverfront living. They highly value the parks, open space, and their backyards. They also value their connection, sense of belonging, neighbourhood contacts and the diversity of the community.

Despite their strong connection to the river, many in the community have expressed the community need to feel safe and secure in their homes, something that has been a challenge for many after past flood events.

Environment	Strength
Physical/built environment	Proximity to city Tram route positive urban development
Natural environment	Size of block, garden, feels like living in the country Open space, environment River is our playground Garden/backyard Reminders of Indigenous significance
Social relationships	Great neighbours, friends, community Sense of belonging People are down to earth Diversity Feels like home

Community Flood Plan Objectives

Objective 1: Community voices are heard by emergency agencies and shape emergency planning.

What we'll do	Why we're doing it	What success looks like
We (Council) will…	**So that…**	**And then (by June 2026) …**
· Host meetings to listen to what community members think Emergency Management agencies could do before, during and after a flood. · Take community ideas to Emergency Management agencies.	· A Maribyrnong Community Flood Plan can be created. · Emergency Management agencies consider the community's ideas in their emergency planning.	· Emergency planning includes the Maribyrnong community's ideas. · Community members are told which ideas will be supported and reasons why any ideas can't be included in emergency planning.





Images: Property Flood Risk Card and Neighbourhood Flood Network Launch September 2025, Community Flood Planning Day May 2025

Community Flood Plan Objectives

Objective 2: Emergency flood information is shared by the community, for the community.

What we'll do	Why we're doing it	What success looks like
We (Council and all Network Leaders) will…	**So that…**	**And then (by December 2026) …**
· Work together to start the Maribyrnong Neighbourhood Flood Network, recruiting Network Leaders and Network Members and organising two meetings per year. · Provide Network Leaders and Members with any training and tools they need. · Pass flood information about risk, preparedness and warnings, via Network Leaders and Members, to Community. · Pass information about Community's worries, strengths and future needs to Council via Network Leaders and Members.	· All households at risk of flood have access to a Network Leader. · Network Leaders feel confident and clear about their role and what they are going to do. · All households at risk of flood have acccess to information about their household risk, preparedness and warnings. · Council will receive regular updates about the community's flood preparedness worries, strengths and future needs. · Council can share the community's worries, strengths and future needs with Emergency Management agencies.	· Community members know who their Network Leaders are for their neighbourhood or group. · Network Leaders and Members report feeling supported in their role/s and have access to training. · Flood risk and preparedness information will flow to Community via multiple channels that suit community preferences for receiving information where possible. · Council and the Maribyrnong Neighbourhood Flood Network can respond to the community's worries and future needs. · Emergency Management agencies hear about the community's worries, strengths and future needs at least once per year.

Community Flood Plan Objectives

Objective 3: Maribyrnong's preparedness for floods increases.

What we'll do	Why we're doing it	What success looks like
We (Council and all Network Leaders) will…	**So that…**	**And then (by December 2028) …**
· Work together and with Emergency Management agencies to create tools (e.g. Property Risk Cards, Welcome to the Neighbourhood pack, videos on preparing your property, exit mapping) or events (e.g. workshops, community flood practice exercises) about flood risk and preparedness.	· Network Leaders can share at least three tools and host events about preparedness with their designated neighbourhood. · Network Members can share at least three tools and host events about preparedness with their designated group(s).	· Maribyrnong community members including new residents) report an increased understanding of their flood risk. · Maribyrnong community members (including new residents) report an increased feeling of preparedness for future floods.

Objective 4: Maribyrnong's community connectedness increases.

What we'll do	Why we're doing it	What success looks like
We (Council and some Network Leaders) will…	**So that…**	**And then (by December 2028) …**
· Work together to plan and host activities and events to increase community connectedness. · Develop a roster for post-flood check-ins of isolated or vulnerable community members.	· Each neighbourhood will have at least one social connection opportunity. · Each neighbourhood is supported to host one social connection opportunity for their group. · No-one is left out of supports in a future flood.	· Maribyrnong community members report increased feelings of community connectedness. · Isolated and vulnerable community members report feeling well supported.

Maribyrnong Neighbourhood Flood Network

Role of the network

Goal

The role of community leaders - both formal and informal - is critical in disasters, with communities often looking to these figures for concrete information.

The Maribyrnong Neighbourhood Flood Network aims to equip these community leaders with resources and training to increase the reach of critical flood risk and preparedness information. The goal is to make this information accessible to all, particularly those who may face barriers accessing information through the existing channels.

Approach

Network members receive information and tools to better inform them of flood risk and how to be prepared. Network members then share this amongst their neighbours and contacts.

The network members also relay information on local needs to Council to enable informed decision-making, provide resources and programs to community where feasible, and share information with agencies and emergency services as needed.

Members also co-create preparedness tools and host connection activities within their neighbourhoods.

This is not intended to replace the current warning system; rather it aims to support the flow of inforwation into community to increase the reach of the warning system.

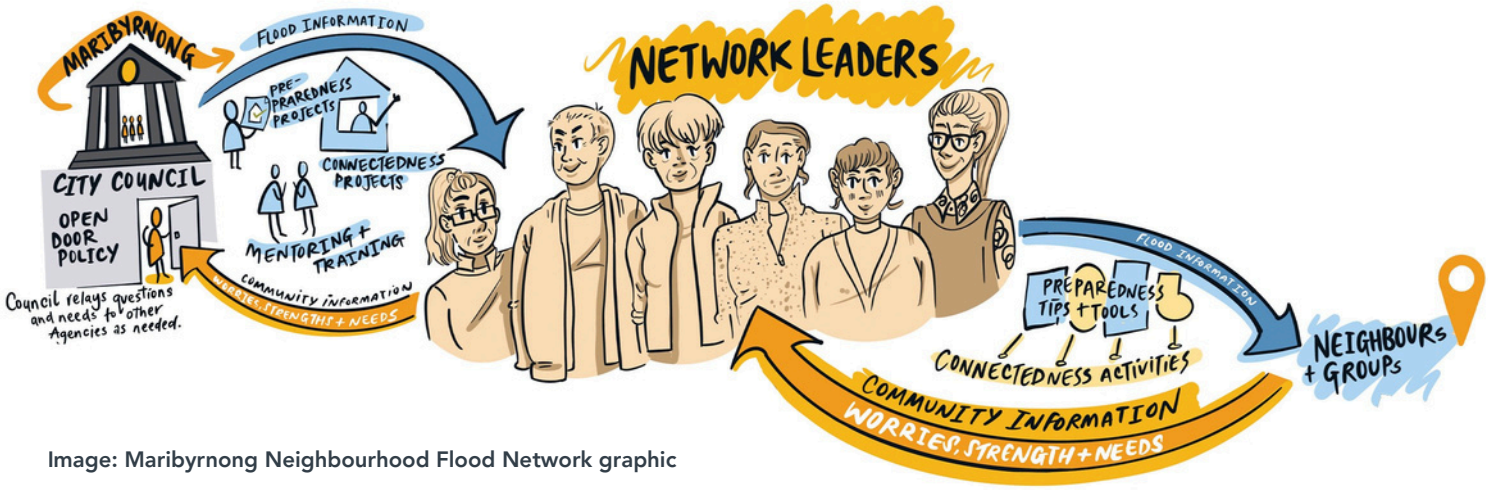


Image: Maribyrnong Neighbourhood Flood Network graphic

Maribyrnong Neighbourhood Flood Network activities

Agency recommendations

- Create a series of recommendations for the agencies involved in emergency planning to be presented to the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee to enable them to encompass the local context in emergency planning. This will be detailed on pages 14-15.

Preparedness and early warning systems

- Establish local information-sharing networks for real-time communication on flood risk and preparedness including neighbourhood WhatsApp groups or similar
- Co-create resources and tools to fill information gaps, for example a video demonstrating how to prepare your property for a flood, or exit mapping
- Connect with new residents to share information on flood risk and preparedness
- Support planning for community exercises
- Utilise feedback loops created with Council to inform Council and agencies about community fears, visions and gaps

Community connection and support

- Community events unrelated to the 2022 flood event to increase social connection



Image: community preparedness event June 2025

Asks for agencies

These requests have been identified by the Maribyrnong community based on their lived experience in the 2022 flood.

Before a flood

Theme	Actions	Leads
Communication	• Establish channels of communication between community at risk of flood and agencies before a flood • Inform residents of these information channels in advance	Maribyrnong City Council
Planning	• Undertake an annual agency and community flood exercise • Review forecasting effectiveness and explore opportunities to upgrade gauges, monitoring technology and other solutions such as sirens • Undertake community mapping to better understand needs • Consult with people with lived experience or experts when planning for future Emergency Relief Centre activation to enable consideration for accessibility, and cultural safety • Provide a resource kit for residents in the at-risk area • Create a volunteer coordination plan to enable volunteers to safely support communities following a flood • Pre-prepare sandbag stock and establish accessible collection points • Create a framework to support young people in emergencies and facilitate youth engagement in emergency management planning • A representative from the Maribyrnong community participates as a member of the Municipal Emergency Planning Committee (MEMPC) and Flood and Storm Sub-Committee • Review the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) and sub-plans to ensure they consider needs of people with a disability, older adults, children, the culturally and linguistically diverse community and other groups that experience barrier in emergencies	VicSES Melbourne Water Maribyrnong City Council MEMPC
Community preparedness	• Provide clear resources in multiple languages outlining what to do in a flood event tailored to the local context • Provide support to map exit routes based on historical information • Hold Emergency Relief Centre walk-through sessions to build community awareness of supports available • Hold an annual preparedness meeting with residents to share seasonal outlook and reinforce preparedness information • Share risk information with local real estates and owners' corporations	VicSES Maribyrnong City Council MEMPC BoM

During a flood

Theme	Actions	Leads
Communication	• Provide interpreters and translated material at the Emergency Relief Centre • Provide several message boards in accessible locations to share critical information	Maribyrnong City Council
Coordination	• Provide support with transport to the Emergency Relief Centre or to alternative accommodation where feasible via a community bus • Activate local spaces for use where beneficial, e.g. the Parish at St Margaret's Catholic Primary School or Highpoint Shopping Centre to move cars, provide relief and an additional safe space • Provide dedicated staff available to help residents apply for rebates, grants and other support and offer this as an outreach service • Outreach and psycho-social support provided, including supports appropriate for children and young people • Support community volunteers to activate their own relief centres in an emergency	MEMPC Maribyrnong City Council Department of Education DFFH

After a flood

Theme	Actions	Leads
Communication	• Provide clear information about returning home, cleaning up and what to expect • Use multiple channels of communication and languages • Environmental Protection Authority and Department of Health to provide information on sanitation and clean up safety using accessible formats	Maribyrnong City Council
Coordination	• Coordinated volunteer clean-up program implemented • Insurance, financial, psychosocial and case support available at the Recovery Centre for at least six weeks • Coordinate relief support for residents, including provisions for 'vulnerable' residents • Offer clean-up programs and hard rubbish collection at several intervals • A detailed needs assessment to be undertaken alongside the Secondary Impact Assessments to better understand relief needs • Dedicated staff available at visible, accessible locations to support residents to access recovery information and support	Maribyrnong City Council Emergency Recovery Victoria MEMPC

Maribyrnong
CITY COUNCIL

Maribyrnong City Council offices

Mail address	PO Box 58, West Footscray Vic 3012
Phone	9688 0200
After hours/emergency	9688 0200
Fax	9687 7793
Email	email@maribyrnong.vic.gov.au
Web	www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au

TIS 131 450

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