



Flood Mapping Consultation - A Tale of Two Cities

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The Victorian Floodplain Management Strategy requires all LGAs to ensure that Planning Schemes correctly identify the areas at risk of a 1%AEP flood. Whilst government agencies, town planners and engineers see this as a noble and worthy endeavour, residents are not so keen on having their primary investment encumbered with a flood overlay.

Melbourne's municipal Councils have only recently become involved in the assessment and designation of areas at risk of flooding. Historically, Melbourne Water used the 60-hectare rule to restrict their assessment of flood risk only to the drains and water courses that they controlled. Many municipal councils took it upon themselves to assess the residual flood risks up stream of these systems, but formal designation was, and is, a politically sensitive issue.

This presentation outlines my experiences with conveying flood mapping outcomes to residents at two municipal Councils. The cities of Banyule and Boroondara are both situated within a 20km radius of the Melbourne CBD. Both municipalities are impacted by residual flood risks resulting from natural drainage paths being obstructed by late 19th and early 20th century urban development. Both municipalities are also undergoing significant redevelopment. Without appropriate planning and building controls in place, many new developments could be placed on land subject to flooding exacerbating the pre-existing flood risks.

In both cases, the catchment modelling was the easy part of the exercise. The real work began when individual property owners were informed that their properties were subject to flooding. Consultation at Banyule consisted of sending out letters and an information sheet to affected properties. Residents were invited to three community workshops where they could find out more information and discuss flooding issues. Phone calls and emails came flooding in from the second that letters were received and the workshops, which were meant to be for informal one-on-one discussions, became more like town hall debates.

Having learnt some lessons from the Banyule experience, a slightly different approach was taken for Boroondara. Being able to anticipate most of the pressing issues helped but the process was still not immune from vocal opposition.

This presentation will delve into the nuances of interpreting flood mapping results within the upper reaches of urban drainage systems, how these results were translated to distinct flood extent boundaries. It will also cover the different consultation and engagement strategies employed to convey to the public why the encumbrance placed on their property was justified.