

FloodSafe

ROCHESTER AND DISTRICT
SPECIAL BULLETIN

Welcome



I am pleased to introduce this special flood preparedness bulletin for the Rochester community.

I recognise that community concern about the risk of flooding is heightened as we near the anniversary of the devastating floods that occurred last spring and summer.

When I was in Rochester with the Member for Rodney Paul Weller recently I was pleased to announce the Victorian Coalition Government's funding for a flood mitigation plan for the town.

The plan will be vital in ensuring that Rochester residents are prepared for a flood event and flood warnings and response is improved.

Local involvement and knowledge will be crucial so I ask that you keep abreast of and have input into the developing plan.

I also want to pay tribute to the resilience of the Rochester community and the tremendous spirit of the town which has prevailed through these very difficult months.

This bulletin is designed to ensure the community is well informed on the roles and responsibilities of the relevant agencies involved in flood response and on the flood recovery works that have been undertaken to date.

I hope that you find the information valuable.

Peter Walsh, MLA
Minister for Water

The North Central CMA will lead the preparation of the Rochester Flood Mitigation Plan and is committed to working with the local community in developing the plan. The community will have the opportunity to provide valuable local knowledge to the plan - providing the CMA with their experience of the floods and their input to options for mitigating the effects of future flooding for the Rochester township.

NORTH CENTRAL CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY (CMA)

The North Central CMA is one of several organisations involved in flood management. Our flood management planning has been ongoing, even during times of drought.

The North Central CMA has a statutory obligation to collect and store data about flooding in the region. This includes developing flood maps for areas at risk. These maps are used in town planning and in Municipal Emergency Management Plans and by the SES during flood emergencies, and are updated and improved as new information becomes available.

The North Central CMA has completed 1,028 flood damage assessments (see Figure 1) across the North Central Victoria region, commenced repair works, and initiated the Flood Recovery Employment Program. We are leading a local project in conjunction with the Shire of Campaspe, the Rochester River Reserve Committee and other stakeholders to enhance the amenity of the Rochester River Reserve. Works are scheduled to commence in early 2012.

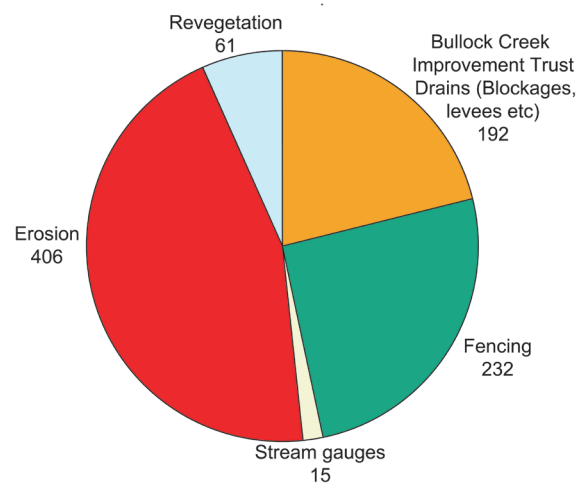


Figure 1: Flood damage assessments conducted by the North Central CMA (February to August 2011).

This bulletin is an initiative between:



FloodSafe

Victorian Government releases Green Paper and is calling for input

The Victorian Government has released a Green Paper to consult stakeholders with a view to modernising Victoria's emergency management governance and arrangements.

Emergency services, volunteers and communities are being asked to respond to the paper with innovative ideas and feedback to improve the way Victoria handles emergencies such as the 2010-11 floods.

The Green Paper can be accessed at www.dpc.vic.gov.au and submissions can be made until 14 November 2011.

Copies of the interim report of the Review of the 2010-11 Flood Warnings Response can be obtained from the Victorian Floods review website www.floodsreview.vic.gov.au. The final report of the Victorian Floods Review will be submitted to the Coalition Government on 1 December 2011.

VICTORIA STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

The Victoria State Emergency Service (VicSES) plays a key role countering the effects of natural and technological emergencies.

The SES also has an important role to support Victoria's emergency management arrangements through planning and preparedness activities.

A well-prepared community, subject to frequent flooding, with about 10 hours warning can reduce actual damage by up to 85%.

The VicSES wants residents of the Rochester area to be ready and prepared for future flood. The recent floods have given us an opportunity to learn from and can actually help people and businesses plan and be ready and better prepared for any future flood. As you know, floods can be dangerous to people, pets, livestock and possessions and can also be very costly!



FLOOD AND FIRE – BE PREPARED

FloodSafe - Information Day at Rochester

Even though no two floods are ever the same, many local dams and creeks have water in them. However big or small a flood may be, they all bring dangers, so the VicSES will be introducing a FloodSafe program to the Rochester area in conjunction with the Rochester Flood Mitigation Plan.

The FloodSafe program is a partnership between the community, VicSES, the Shire of Campaspe and the North Central CMA to improve safety and build upon community resilience. To introduce the Rochester community to the concept of FloodSafe, a joint Flood and Fire Information Day in Rochester is being hosted on:

Date: Saturday 24 September 2011
Time: 10 am – 1 pm
Venue: Rotary Park, Rochester

The day will provide further information on:

- Helping communities develop local flood plans, brochures and maps. These are then built into the Municipal Emergency Management Plan.
- Knowing what to do and how to prepare before, during and after a flood. Knowing where to find emergency information, what to do to keep safe, explaining flood warnings and learning lessons from floods that happen.
- Raising awareness within the community that floods can happen every year and that people need to take responsibility for their own and their family's safety.
- Working with the local community: residents, schools, businesses, farmers, service clubs and local facilities.
- Providing community events and information (newsletters etc) to find out more about being better prepared for floods and participating in making their community a safer place.

All welcome

◀ (from left to right) VicSES volunteer Malcolm Ross, Peter Walsh MLA, North Central CMA Chairman David Clark, and VicSES volunteer Bruce Glasson at the funding announcement to undertake a Flood Mitigation Plan for Rochester.

SHIRE OF CAMPASPE

Jordan Tamblyn was appointed as the Shire of Campaspe's Flood Recovery Officer in May this year. This 12 month position is funded by Regional Development Victoria to address flood recovery issues and priorities in the areas of social, economic and community recovery.

Jordan brings to the position experience in disaster recovery and has worked extensively with people and communities after the Black Saturday bushfires. He is working with various authorities, state government agencies, local businesses and organisations to implement strategies, projects and events across the Rochester region.

To assist the rural sector, the Department of Primary Industries provided funding for a six month Rural Flood Coordination Officer. Dani Ruedin commenced in this role recently to assist the flood-affected farming communities in Campaspe Shire get back on their feet.

Dani's role is dedicated to assisting farmers and other rural residents to recover and re-establish their lives. Dani will work closely with Jordan to facilitate and monitor implementation of the Flood Recovery Action Plan focusing on the farming areas of Campaspe.

Other key areas of focus for Dani include engaging farming communities in a range of flood recovery activities and working closely with other flood recovery groups and agencies such as the Rochester Community Recovery Committee, Catchment Management Authorities, primary industry representatives and businesses, and the Department of Human Services.

Dani has diverse experience working in a range of rural and environmental settings. She has a background in outdoor education and has worked with the rural sector on sustainable land management projects. Dani has been a volunteer on a number of environmental projects and has even worked as a farm hand.

Jordan and Dani can both be contacted at the Shire of Campaspe, 1300 666 535.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Flood support workers are still available to help individuals, families, small business owners and farmers find flood recovery services and support. They provide a single point of contact for practical flood recovery advice and referrals.

Flood support workers can help you:

- find accommodation and temporary housing
- understand the types of support and financial assistance available
- fill out flood-related paperwork.

Flood support workers can also refer you to:

- personal counselling and health services
- advice on repairing or rebuilding your home
- financial or legal advice
- advice for farmers and businesses
- other useful services.

To get in touch with a flood support worker call the service provider in your local area. These service providers also provide counselling for flood-affected people. Services are free and confidential.

To find your local service provider refer to contact details for the Department of Human Services on the back page.

GOULBURN-MURRAY WATER

What does Goulburn-Murray Water (G-MW) do?

- Operating and maintaining 16 water storages across northern Victoria that hold 9 million megalitres of water is an ongoing and major part of G-MW's business.
- We manage water storage, delivery and drainage systems as well as the recreational aspects of water storages as great places to visit and enjoy.
- The primary role of our storages is to harvest and store customers' water entitlements and deliver water to customers when they request it.
- G-MW does not issue flood alerts or flood warnings or issue rainfall forecasts.

Floods and their impact

Between September 2010 and February 2011 G-MW experienced flooding across most of its operating regions with record flooding in both the Loddon and Campaspe catchments. The floods covered some 16,000 square km of G-MW's service region with approximately 3,000 km of its channel network affected. Infrastructure was damaged and recreational areas were affected by floodwaters.

G-MW received the highest summer inflows across all its catchments since statistics were first recorded in 1891. Some of the numbers were astounding, particularly at Lake Eppalock which received 46 times the average summer inflow.

G-MW customers, staff and communities in our service area were all impacted in some way by the damage caused by these events.

Flood recovery

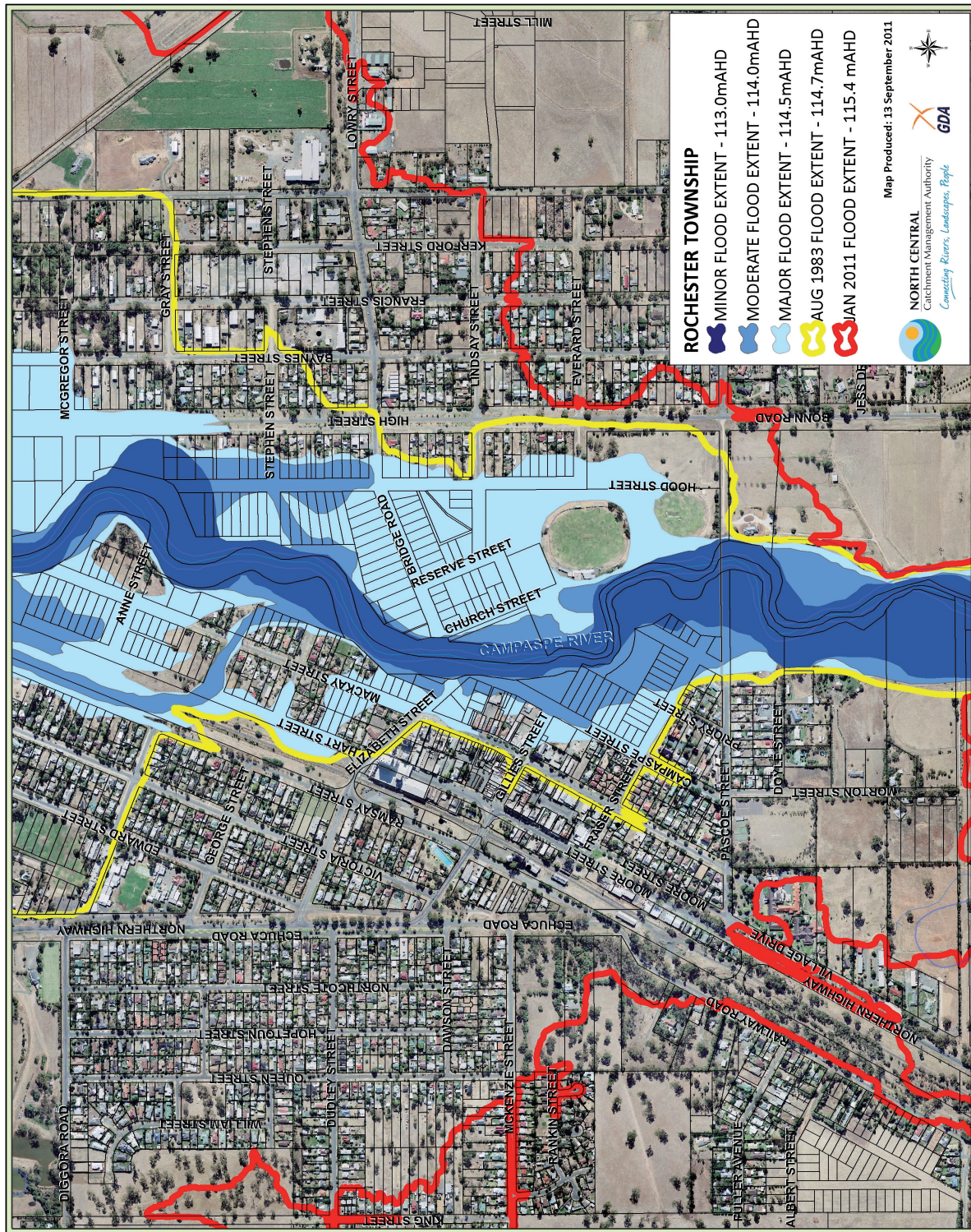
Flood recovery goes on for a long time. G-MW has repaired or replaced damaged infrastructure and public recreation areas. Dam gates have been repaired or replaced, channel banks reinstated and recreation areas cleaned up and repaired. The G-MW office in Rochester has been refurbished with most of the flood damage to the interior of the building repaired. Following the floods, one of the main issues for G-MW was the 40 degree heat after the January rain. While some areas were flooding, others required water for irrigation again within days. Repairing channels in order to use them for water supply was a logistical challenge for G-MW.

Moving forward

Following the January 2011 floods, G-MW was criticised for perceived inappropriate action in relation to flood mitigation at Lake Eppalock. This has highlighted the need to reinforce the role of each agency in relation to flood warnings and information updates. A preliminary internal review has been undertaken and G-MW is confident that those procedures remain valid for future safe operation of our assets. G-MW is also engaging an independent review of the dams operating procedures and the use of those procedures during these two flood events. The review is scheduled for completion in October 2011.

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Figure 2: The map shows the possible extent of flooding associated with the Bureau of Meteorology's Minor, Moderate and Major flood warnings for Rochester. The map also shows the approximate extent of flooding that occurred in August 1983 and more recently January 2011. The levels shown on the map are in metres to Australian Height Datum and relate to the gauge at the bridge in Rochester.



Lake Eppalock Volume: Since Construction

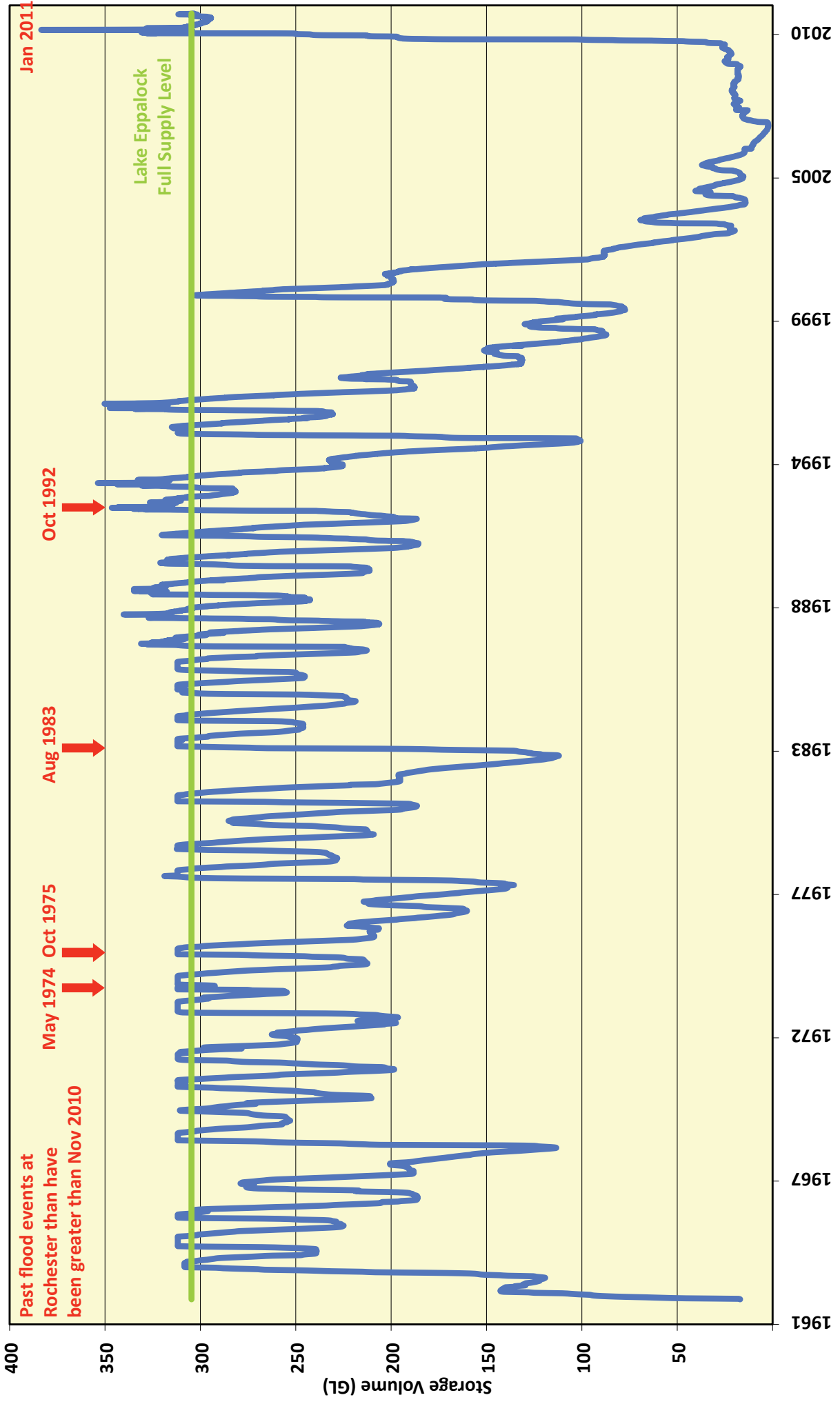


Figure 3:

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COLIBAN WATER

Coliban Water continues to invest in flood recovery. So far \$900,000 has been spent on Coliban Water's flood response and recovery works in Rochester.

Floods impacted the water treatment plant, one of the treated water storage tanks, and seven sewer pump stations.

To restore services to customers and to continue to plan for the future the projects completed or underway are:

- Treated water storage tank, drained, cleaned out, resealed and refilled.
- Seven sewer pump stations repaired including major electrical works.
- Changes to the dosing system as a short-term preventative measure against future flooding. This is part of a pre-existing \$900,000 Water Quality Improvement Program chemical system upgrade.
- Planning underway for future upgrade to allow the plant to continue to operate when there's significant changes in the quality of raw water entering the plant from the Waranga Channel.
- Proposal being developed for a 1.85-metre high, precast concrete flood barrier around the plant. Discussions under way with North Central Catchment Management Authority and Campaspe Shire Council on the proposal.
- At-risk electrical boxes have been identified and plans to raise them above flood level have been developed.
- Using our learning from the floods to update our flood response plan for the Rochester Water Treatment Plant to maximise our ability to keep the plant operating should there be future flooding.



Flood water at Rochester Water Treatment Plant (17 January 2011)

DEPARTMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) provides support to the Victorian State Emergency Service during natural events including floods and storms.

During the January 2011 floods, DSE staff assisted with the emergency response including deploying staff to help with sandbagging and played a role in the emergency response. DSE staff were involved in a variety of roles, including within the Incident Control Centre and in the field, for example sandbagging and setting up and managing the base camp.

DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) has been working with flood affected food and fibre producers to assist in their recovery.

A focus of these activities has been on developing the information required by farmers and making it available through the website www.dpi.vic.gov.au, practical workshops and face to face contact.

A series of workshops have been held across the flood affected areas to address some of the issues flooding has brought, such as restoration of pastures, fodder options and composting damaged hay. Further workshops will be held on request. Call Damian Jones on (03) 5450 9525 if you or a group have any suggestions on topics.

Information fact sheets covering a range of issues such as soil health, pasture recovery and animal health can be obtained from the DPI website, through DPI offices or by phoning the DPI customer service centre on 136 186.

Staff are also available at your local DPI office for further assistance or to point you in the right direction for other services such as financial counselling or recovery grants.

For further information or to request a workshop contact the DPI 136 186.

Top 10 FloodSafe Tips

1. Make a Flood Emergency Plan with a phone list, list of things to do to be ready and a safer place to stay already worked out.
2. Put together a home or business Emergency Kit with a battery operated torch, radio, medicines, photos, documents, any special needs.
3. Listen to weather forecasts for rain that may cause flooding around your area – this includes upstream rain catchments that could be far away.
4. Check radio, TV and websites for flood advice and warnings. Keep in touch with neighbours and watch the rain happening around you.
5. Find out how bigger floods might affect your property and local area - even if your property did not flood last time. Where did the water reach in big floods of the past? Council's flood mapping, contained in the Campaspe Planning Scheme, is a good place to start.
6. Write down the list of furniture, electrical equipment (e.g. computer) and valuables you would lift onto benches or tables above the water level.
7. Have a plan to move cars, caravans etc. to high ground - well above floodwaters.
8. Farmers should move livestock, farm equipment and hay to known higher ground when the early warning, Flood Watch or Minor Flood Warning is issued.
9. Place sandbags in toilets and over laundry and bathroom plug holes to stop sewage back flow.
10. If you decide or are advised to evacuate, leaving early before conditions become too dangerous, is always the safest option. Remember to turn off electricity, gas and water and lock the doors. Take your Emergency Kit and pets with you.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Where can I access up-to-date information regarding predicted rainfall and flood warnings?

Victoria SES' website has updates and warnings on current emergencies and is available at www.ses.vic.gov.au

Warnings will also be broadcast on ABC local radio, community broadcasters, commercial radio and SKY news television.

The Bureau of Meteorology is Australia's national weather, climate and water agency. Visit www.bom.vic.gov.au or contact the Victorian Regional office on (03) 9669 4000 for current information.

During an emergency, ABC radio (Central Victoria) will broadcast updates on warnings – for Rochester tune in to ABC radio (Central Victoria) on 91.1 FM.

What warning systems are in place to advise the Rochester community if the town is at risk of flooding?

Victoria SES will use many methods to warn the community - through the radio, via its website and occasionally through local newspapers, although residents should always monitor local conditions.

In life-threatening situations, Victoria SES may use the Emergency Alert system (see page 8).

How many sandbags can I expect to receive?

To sandbag around a whole house 1 metre high would take about 2,700 sandbags and 5 people about 45 hours to lay them. For all the houses in an effected town this would be an impossible task. As a result only a limited number of sandbags are provided by the control agency in the situation where the water may just enter a house. The sandbags are then used to block openings such as doorways. Therefore only 15 or 20 sandbags may need to be provided.

My house and or business has been flooded, who should I call for help?

The Victoria State Emergency Service (VicSES) provides emergency support and information to the community and should be the first point of contact in an emergency situation.

SES volunteers are on call 24 hours a day to provide emergency assistance if you or your property is affected by a flood or storm. When you call 132 500 a trained call taker will note the details and dispatch an SES Unit to the incident.

Where are the Relief Centres and evacuation points in the Rochester District ?

During some emergency situations, evacuation of parts of the community may be necessary.

Under current legislation in Victoria it is not compulsory for people to evacuate, but emergency services organisations can still recommend that evacuation is the safest option in dangerous situations.

Victoria Police are responsible for managing evacuations in Victoria, and they will work closely with the SES and other organisations to assess risks and determine the best evacuation points.

Because every emergency is different, there are no standard evacuation points or relief centres in Rochester. Depending on the situation, some sites may be safe for one flood but dangerous for another flood at a different time.

Instead of having standard evacuation points, emergency services will assess the emergency and will determine the safest site based on the situation.

What happens to channels during major floods? Don't they take the water away?

During major floods Goulburn-Murray Water shuts down the irrigation channel network by closing regulating structures. This allows overland floods to follow natural flow paths and aims to prevent flood water being transferred along channels and affecting other landowners.

G-MW's channel systems were significantly affected by the flooding, with many of the earthen channel banks washed away. Some road bridges owned by G-MW were destroyed and the G-MW customer centre in Rochester was also flooded.

Lake Eppalock is at capacity, I am concerned that spring and summer rainfall could result in Rochester flooding.

Rochester is safer with a full Lake Eppalock than without it, even though the dam was not designed to provide active flood mitigation. Lake Eppalock was constructed primarily to store irrigation water, owned by customers, to the Lower Campaspe and Rochester Irrigation Areas and is operated by Goulburn-Murray Water. The dam reduces the peak of a flood as it passes through, meaning lower water levels downstream even under large events.

FloodSafe

Where do I get information if the situation changes quickly or if the area is at risk of flooding?

The best way to stay informed during emergency situations is to make sure that you use as many sources as possible to get information. This includes closely watching the conditions around you and getting information and advice from all available sources.

Some key sources of emergency information are:

- Emergency broadcasters in the Rochester area such as ABC 91.1 FM, 3BO 93.5 FM, 2QN, Easymix 1071 AM, 98.3 FM and SKY News TV
- The SES website: www.ses.vic.gov.au
- The SES Information Line: 1300 842 737
- Local council websites and information lines that may be set up during the emergency

During emergencies when lives might be at risk or evacuation is recommended, the Emergency Alert warning system may be used as one method of getting information out into the community.

The Emergency Alert warning system sends a text to mobile phones and a voice message to landline phones to advise you about the emergency situation and what you can do to respond.

It is important to remember it is only one method and you should never wait to receive a call or text message before you act.

The Emergency Alert warning system has only been operating in Australia for a short time, and emergency services are continually refining its capability and use.

For more information about the Emergency Alert warning system visit www.emergencyalert.gov.au.

Useful Contact Details

NORTH CENTRAL CMA

To report blockages or damage to waterways contact:

Huntly office (03) 5448 7124

www.nccma.vic.gov.au

VICTORIA STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

For emergency SES assistance in a flood or storm for the cost as a local call (mobiles may be higher).

Free call within Victoria 132 500

www.ses.vic.gov.au

SHIRE OF CAMPASPE

(STD free within Shire ONLY) 1300 666 535

Outside Shire area (03) 5481 2200

www.campaspe.vic.gov.au

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Flood recovery information is available from your local

Department of Human Services, contact:

Grampians region 1300 307 512

Loddon Mallee region 1300 165 413

www.dhs.vic.gov.au/floods

GOULBURN-MURRAY WATER

To report faults and emergencies, contact G-MW's 24 hour emergency line on 1800 064 184

www.g-mwater.com.au

COLIBAN WATER

All enquiries during office hours, and 24 hour fault or emergency contact:

Bendigo 1300 363 200

www.coliban.com.au

DEPARTMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

For the cost as a local call from anywhere in Australia (mobiles may be higher).

136 186

www.dse.vic.gov.au

DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

For the cost as a local call from anywhere in Australia (mobiles may be higher).

136 186

www.dpi.vic.gov.au

BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY

Victorian Regional office (03) 9669 4000

www.bom.vic.gov.au

AMBULANCE, FIRE OR POLICE

For Emergency Assistance 000