

# Pental Island Levees Future Management

Newsletter 1 – August 2022



## Call for Steering Committee Members

North Central catchment Management Authority (CMA) is leading a project to identify an agreed approach with the community, Council and other agencies on future management arrangements for the Pental Island flood mitigation infrastructure.

We are calling for expressions of interest from Pental Island landowners to be members of the project steering committee. If you are interested or would like to know more, please email or call Owen Hayden on (03) 5440 1896 or email [owen.hayden@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:owen.hayden@nccma.vic.gov.au)

## Background

Pental Island is protected from flooding by two ring levees, with the Loddon floodway separating the levees. The levees are 78.5 kilometres long and were built in the 1920s. The floodway balances flows between the Murray and Little Murray Rivers when floods occur.

The Pental Island River Improvement Trust (later renamed the Pental Island River Management Board) was constituted to manage river improvement works including flood protection for Pental Island. Pental Island landowners ran the River Improvement Trust and then the River Management Board under the legislation that existed at the time. They used the systems the state government provided to;

- coordinate works,
- tap into government grants and,
- collect annual rates from all properties on the island to undertake maintenance or contribute to capital works.

The majority of levees were reconstructed by the Pental Island River Management Board to provide a high level of protection to the Pental Island community. The system protects against flood events up to those with a 1% chance of occurring in any given year (or occurring on average once every 100 years).

North Central CMA was established in 1997 and took over all the property, rights, liabilities, obligations, powers, functions, and staff of the Pental Island River Management Board which was abolished at the same time.

Since its formation, North Central CMA has not collected any rates from the landowners of Pental Island, consequently it has not undertaken any regular maintenance on the assets of the former Pental Island River Management Board.



The Victorian Floodplain Management Strategy (VFMS), released in 2016 in response to the 2010-11 flood events, sets government policy and defines accountabilities for the management of levees and other flood mitigation infrastructure. The key basis to the strategy is a beneficiary-pays approach. That means the benefitting landowners are accountable for deciding on the level of service they desire and funding the management of the works to achieve that level of service.

## What we are trying to achieve

The project aims to provide all Pental Island landowners with information about the options that are available and work with the community to develop an agreed approach for how the levees, floodway and associated works will be managed into the future.

## North Central CMA's Project Manager

The project manager is North Central CMA's Waterways and Floodplain Officer Owen Hayden. Owen is an engineer who has worked in the Victorian water industry for more than 30 years. He grew up at Piangil where his family had a dairy farm.

Owen will be spending a substantial amount of time in the Swan Hill area over the life of the project. Owen can be contacted on mobile 0417 338 089 or via email [owen.hayden@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:owen.hayden@nccma.vic.gov.au)



## Role of the Project Steering Committee

The project will be guided by a community based steering committee. The committee will be formed to include representatives from the following groups;

- Swan Hill Rural City Council
- Landowners
- North Central CMA
- Goulburn Murray Water
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

The Traditional Owners, the Wamba Wamba Nation, will be asked if and how they would like to be involved.

The Steering Committee will confirm the messages that will be presented to landowners. The committee will also define how engagement with the benefitting landowners will be undertaken.

As we gather feedback from landowners, there might be a need for the committee to decide on changes to project direction. For example, information deficiencies might be identified which require time and resources to address. A key question for the committee will be the method used to gauge the level of support for each option.

We anticipate the steering committee will meet four or five times over the 12-month life of the project. Meetings will be held in Swan Hill.

## Expressions of Interest

If you are interested in joining the Steering Committee, please fill in the attached form and return via the enclosed Reply-Paid envelope. Or alternatively email [owen.hayden@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:owen.hayden@nccma.vic.gov.au) answering the questions on the attached form.

## For more information

Telephone 03 5448 7124 or visit [www.nccma.vic.gov.au](http://www.nccma.vic.gov.au)

