

## 2.2 Floodplain Risk Management Committee

The first formal step in the process is the formation of a committee chaired by council. It is advisory in nature, as responsibility for planning matters lies with council as a whole. Therefore it should report directly to council or its appropriate executive committee.

Membership of and the role of the committee are discussed in Appendix D. Its principal objective is to assist council in the development and implementation of one or more floodplain risk management plans for its service area. The committee is both the focus of, and a forum for, the discussion of technical, social, economic and ecological issues and for the distillation of possibly differing viewpoints on these issues.

Local government boundaries rarely follow catchment boundaries, therefore it may be necessary to establish a committee involving a number of adjoining councils. One instance is where floodplain risk management measures in one council area are likely to influence the effectiveness of management measures or flooding behaviour in another council area. The establishment of a committee representing a number of council areas can result in a more holistic appraisal of flooding, social and ecological issues, successful implementation of risk management strategies, and more efficient use of expertise.

Once the committee has completed the prime task of developing the management plan including its implementation strategy, and council has adopted these, it is suggested that a limited group remain to oversee implementation.

## 2.3 Data Collection

A variety of data are required to assess flood behaviour and the effectiveness, costs and benefits of management measures. It is important to define the data currently available and that needed for the study, to identify information gaps. The management committee should initiate studies, where gaps exist, to collect the social, economic, flooding, ecological, land use, cultural, and emergency management data required in management studies. Where relevant data exists (discussed in Appendix E) this should be collated and referred to in investigations.

Data collection should not be seen as an end in itself, but as input to enable preparation of properly informed studies, management plans and floodplain risk management decisions.

## 2.4 Flood Study

A flood study is a comprehensive technical investigation of flood behaviour (Appendix F). It defines the nature of flood risk by providing information on the extent, level and velocity of floodwaters and on the distribution of flood flows across various sections of the floodplain (shown in Figure 2.2) for the full range of flood events up to and including the PMF.

Major components of a flood study involve determining discharge (hydrologic aspects) and water levels, velocities, etc (hydraulic aspects) for floods of varying severity.

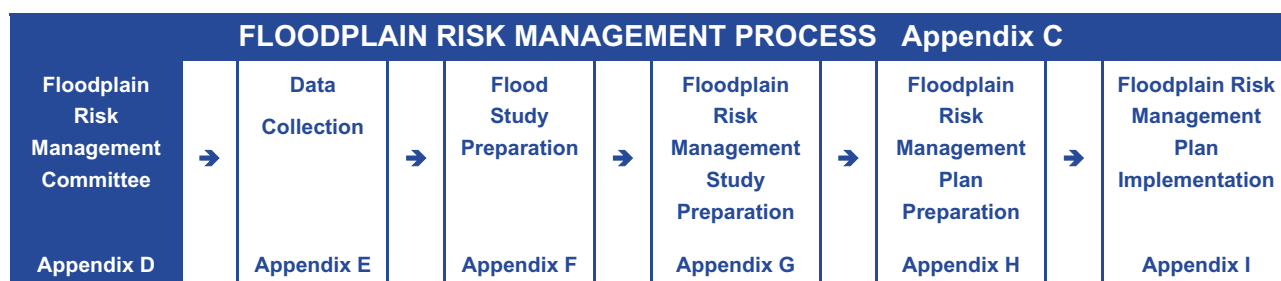
A variety of analytical tools can be used in flood studies, depending on the data available, the flow situation, the nature and extent of development, and the level of detail required. Detailed studies are generally necessary in both urban and rural areas, because knowledge of flood characteristics is required to deal with existing problems, future development and the continuing flood risk.

The flood study also determines hydraulic and hazard categories within the floodplain for the potential range of floods and land use scenarios in order to consider cumulative affects. The manual recognises three hydraulic categories (floodways, flood storage and flood fringe) and two hazard categories (high and low), as described in Appendix L.

Investigating the full range of flood events up to and including the PMF enables changes in the nature and consequences of flooding to be assessed as flood severity increases. These may include increases in velocity and depth, changes in hazard category, the creation of 'islands' (which may be completely inundated in larger events), and the number of properties inundated etc.

Determining appropriate areas for and types of development generally depend upon flood exposure of the land, as defined by hydraulic and hazard categorisation in consideration of isolation (see Appendix L6).

## APPENDIX D FLOODPLAIN RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



| TECHNICAL SUPPORT APPENDICES (Those directly supporting this Appendix are highlighted) |  |                       |  |                                   |  |               |  |  |
|--|--|-----------------------|--|-----------------------------------|--|---------------|--|--|
| Floodplain Risk Management Measures  |  | Flood Planning Levels |  | Hydraulic & Hazard Categorisation |  | Flood Damages |  | Emergency Response Planning for Floods |
| Appendix J   |  | Appendix K            |  | Appendix L                        |  | Appendix M    |  | Appendix N                             |

### D1 Introduction

The establishment of a floodplain risk management committee by council is the first formal step in the floodplain risk management process. It may be formulated as a new committee or its role may be incorporated within an existing council committee. Council will need to decide on the appropriate approach to ensure the committee is effective for its area.

The management committee acts as both a focus and forum for the discussion of technical, social, economic, environmental and cultural issues and for the distillation of possibly differing viewpoints on these issues into a management plan. It achieves this by ensuring that all stakeholders (often with competing desires) are equally represented. As such, the composition and roles of committee members are matters of key importance.

### D2 Need for a Committee

The development of a management plan, for either urban or rural areas must, take into consideration a number of diverse issues which include:

- the risk, danger to personal safety and property damage, imposed on existing land uses (the existing risk);
- the cumulative impact of flooding on potential future land uses and occupants

and of development on flooding (the future risk);

- the management of the continuing flood risk remaining in both existing and future development areas after works and controls are implemented;
- the environmental impact of existing and potential future developments and floodplain risk management measures;
- the broad scale catchment issues such as water quality, riverine and floodplain enhancement and land management;
- cumulative impacts as a result of changes in hydrology, floodplain geometry, or other factors;
- the potential economic cost and benefits to both the private and public sectors of floodplain occupation;
- the potential economic benefits of proposed risk management measures;
- potential intangible flood costs, including physical and psychological effects of flooding;
- social factors, including the needs and aspirations of the local community, both existing and in the future;
- planning options and restrictions, including special zonings and planning controls, opportunities; and

- ❑ the protection of Aboriginal sites and places and European heritage.

The expertise necessary to address these issues needs to be drawn from a variety of sources, including:

- ❑ the local council itself (both elected representatives and council staff);
- ❑ the local community;
- ❑ key industry groups;
- ❑ environmental interest groups;
- ❑ State and Commonwealth Government agencies; and
- ❑ specialist consultants, as engaged.

The development and implementation of a floodplain risk management plan is solely a local council responsibility in urban situations. The local government role is discussed in Section 3.1. The role of DIPNR in the rural areas in western New South Wales designated under Part VIII of the Water Act is outlined in Section 3.2.

Given the complexity and range of issues to be addressed in the process as outlined above, the committee needs to be able to coordinate and disseminate the interests, advice and expertise available from State and Commonwealth Government agencies and the local community. The committee should also consider the establishment of a specialist technical sub-committee (discussed in Section D6) to deal with complex technical issues, if required.

In certain circumstances it may be necessary to establish a single committee involving adjoining council(s) to effect coordinated planning. This may be appropriate where the floodplain under investigation embraces more than one local government area and where structural, land use or flood response measures in one council area are likely to influence the effectiveness of management measures or flood behaviour in other council areas. Consideration should also be given to the relationship with adjoining councils, and if necessary, the establishment of an overall committee to address the flooding problems on a catchment wide basis.

### D3 Role of the Committee

The management committee does not have any formal powers. Rather, it has an advisory role, but an important one. The principal

objective of the committee is to assist the council in the development and implementation of a management plan for the area(s) under its jurisdiction. However, the committee also assists in:

- ❑ formulating objectives (in accordance with ESD principles), strategies and outcomes sought from the process (see Section C3);
- ❑ providing a link between the local community and council;
- ❑ identifying the flood problem to be assessed and the study area (see Section F2);
- ❑ considering and making recommendations to council on appropriate development controls for use until the management plan is completed, approved and implemented (see Section C9);
- ❑ supervising the collection of necessary data (Appendix E) and supervising and monitoring the progress and findings of studies being undertaken in the various stages of the management plan;
- ❑ providing input into known flood behaviour as part of the flood study;
- ❑ identifying management options and providing input into their consideration as part of the management study;
- ❑ identifying implementation strategies for the management plan;
- ❑ monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of the management plan during and after its implementation;
- ❑ coordinating and monitoring the public education programs essential to the long term viability of the management plan; and
- ❑ coordination with catchment management boards, emergency management planning and other advisory bodies.

Once the committee has completed the prime task of developing a management plan and associated implementation strategy, and the council has adopted these, it is suggested that a limited group remain to oversee implementation.

#### *D4 Membership of the Committee*

The membership of the committee needs to be a balanced representation of stakeholders such as agencies, groups and/or individuals effecting, affected by or coordinating floodplain risk management. Membership should be flexible to ensure the right mix of interests are represented. Typically, membership would include:

- elected members of council;
- council staff from engineering, planning and environmental disciplines;
- an appropriate number of representatives of the local community (for example, local flood affected landholders (residential and business), relevant industry bodies (eg the chamber of commerce), and environmental groups);
- representatives of relevant industry bodies;
- officers from the DIPNR; and
- representative(s) from the SES.

Officers from other relevant government agencies or departments or catchment management authorities may be co-opted to the committee as and when required.

Because the responsibility for planning matters lies with council, the committee should report either to council or to its appropriate standing committee, which has the final decision making power.

As discussed in Section D2, a single committee on a floodplain shared by a number of council areas may be desirable or necessary.

#### *D5 Role of Committee Members*

The primary role and responsibility of the various members on the management committee are described below. This outline does not aim to limit the contributions made by members, but rather attempts to ensure that all important aspects are given due consideration. It should be noted that the committee is tasked with seeking solutions to the existing, future and continuing flood risk issues, not solely on addressing the past.

It is also important to note that State Government agency representatives do not have committee voting rights but provide advice in relation to their departmental functions and their area of expertise.

#### *D5.1 Elected Members of Council*

Elected members of council are the leaders of this process and should assess the community, political and policy implications of any actions contemplated with the objective of producing an equitable result for the local government area served.

#### *D5.2 Council Staff*

Council staff must include a mix of engineering, strategic and development assessment planning, and environment representatives. They should provide local specialist advice and coordinate:

- input from council, the local community and other committee members;
- the production and presentation of agendas and reports;
- the management of consultants (including preparation of study briefs);
- the management of financial assistance for the project; and
- formulation of draft recommendations to the committee.

The recommended final management plan requires significant input from staff before submission to council.

#### *D5.3 Local Community Representatives*

Community representatives play an important role in the success of the committee and every attempt should be made to have representatives who can make the necessary commitment as indicated in Section D8. Local community representatives should:

- form a link between the committee and the local population in the flood prone area. They therefore need to be able to effectively inform the affected community of the deliberations of the committee and so foster a wider understanding of the process;
- provide historical advice on local problems and perceived solutions;
- consider in detail implications of matters which may impact on the local community; and
- facilitate formal representations to the committee on behalf of the public.

#### *D5.4 Local Environmental Group Representatives*

Local environmental group representatives should provide a link between environmental groups and the committee and enable adequate local environmental input into committee deliberations.

#### *D5.5 Local Industry Body Representatives*

Local industry body representatives should provide a link between the industry body and the committee, where necessary. These may be drawn from the chamber of commerce or other relevant local bodies.

#### *D5.6 The DIPNR Representative*

DIPNR provides representation from both a floodplain risk management and land use planning perspective.

From the floodplain risk management perspective DIPNR's representative should provide technical expertise and steering advice to ensure that the management plan is prepared in accordance with the principles of the NSW Government's Flood Prone Land Policy. The representative should also monitor the progress of the studies and plan, particularly as they relate to current and future government funding programs. A key role of the representative is to provide technical advice, to both council staff and the committee, throughout the process.

From a land use planning perspective DIPNR's representative should ensure that the planning approaches considered and adopted in the management plan are consistent with other areas within the region and State. In addition, DIPNR should provide technical advice to the committee on planning issues throughout the process, on the implications of State or regional planning policies and the provisions of the EP&A Act.

DIPNR also provides advice on other natural resources policies, such as the State Rivers and Estuaries Policy and Wetlands Policy, that link with the Flood Prone Land Policy and the Water Management Act.

#### *D5.7 The SES Representative*

The SES representative (or controller) should consider the implications of any actions

contemplated in regard to risk assessment, flood warning and response plans for the management and evacuation of flood-prone areas, and with regard to the State Emergency Service Act 1989. The SES representative should also provide input from the emergency management viewpoint and ensure that the management plan is developed parallel to and complementary to the local flood plan (prepared under the guidance of the SES).

The SES representative must not be requested to:

- approve private or site specific flood plans or flood emergency response plans prepared for proposed developments (see Section N7); or
- approve incorporation of private or site specific flood plans prepared for proposed developments into the local flood plan.

Private or site specific flood plans or flood emergency response plans (Section N7), written for specific developments and separate from the local flood plan, are ineffectual and should not form the basis of development consent.

Inclusion of specific development proposals in the local flood plan is limited to those assessed and incorporated in the adopted floodplain risk management plan.

#### *D5.8 The Bureau of Meteorology*

The Bureau of Meteorology should provide advice with respect to flood forecasting and warning, as appropriate.

#### *D5.9 Representative of Welfare Services*

Representatives of welfare services (for example, the Department of Community Services) should provide advice regarding the plans in place to deal with flooding, their consistency with the proposed management plan and in the development of contingency plans for post-flood recovery.

### *D6 Technical Sub-Committee*

The role of this sub-committee of the floodplain risk management committee should be to provide technical assistance to enable the committee to fulfil its advisory role to council efficiently, confident that studies and option

assessments are technically adequate and the options proposed are practical and feasible. The roles of the technical sub-committee may include:

- preliminary development of process and individual study objectives, as outlined in Appendices C through H for further consideration by the full committee;
- collection of background data for studies available to council, DIPNR and SES, as outlined in Appendix E;
- preparation of technical project briefs in consultation with the committee;
- review of proposals from consultants in consultation with the committee;
- review of modelling, management options, reports and presentations for technical adequacy prior to presentation and review by the full committee; and
- advice on any other technical matters upon request by the committee.

The technical sub-committee should have membership from council staff (both engineering and strategic planning) and DIPNR. A representative of SES may also be included when the sub-committee is considering emergency management issues.

### *D7 Community Consultation*

The local community, both flood prone and otherwise, has a key role to play in the development, implementation and success of a management plan. If it is to be accepted and successful, it is essential that clear and concise communications flow between the committee and the community so that affected individuals and community groups can 'have their say' and learn of their roles and responsibilities.

The following format is suggested to establish and maintain communication between the council, committee and the local community.

Council should arrange to:

- involve and inform the community (through media releases, newsletters and public meetings) on a range of issues.

These include the role and responsibilities of the committee, its intention to instigate a study/studies for preparation of a management plan, the work council is

undertaking for the flood study, and progress on the studies and plan.

Affected residents should also be informed of the length of time until finalisation of the management plan and implementation of management measures, and of the nature of development controls pending management plan completion;

- call for representatives of the general community and action groups to self nominate for the committee, clearly stating the expected role of members at this time;
- use established local community groups, where they exist, and encourage their representation on the committee;
- make one or two contact people known to the community, usually staff members of council, who can be contacted regarding questions relating to floodplain risk management, during the development and implementation of the management plan;
- define clear goals for each study and estimate the time to complete each investigation and when direct community consultation and feedback is proposed;
- release information to the community and members of the committee at regular intervals, rather than waiting until the completion of one of the formal stages of the management plan, or associated formal meetings of the committee;
- consider appropriate development controls for use until the management plan is completed (see Section C9) considering recommendations of the management committee;
- ensure that simple, clear messages are used to explain the situation in uncomplicated language and relate any implications to property owners and potential development applicants when disseminating information;
- formally adopt the management plan at the completion of the preparation and consideration process; and
- consider changes to the local flood risk management policy and council's strategic planning instruments and associated development controls

during the implementation phase, where strategies result in altered flood behaviour.

### *D8 Commitment of Committee Members*

The floodplain risk management process is neither short nor simple, nor is it the singular responsibility of council officers, consultants or government officers to have input to the process.

The management committee must comprise members who are committed to and actively involved in the preparation and implementation of the management plan. It may take 3 to 5 years to develop the plan and the implementation of all recommendations may take much longer.

In view of the length of time involved the turnover of committee members, including both council staff and elected representatives, can be a problem. Whilst little can be done

with respect to the potential turnover of council and government officers, the structure of the committee should be decided with consideration of its long term viability and relationship with other committees in operation in the local area. Attempts should be made to co-opt local community members who are enthusiastic, energetic and likely to 'see the distance' to complete the management plan.

### *D9 Tradeoffs*

By necessity, the adopted management plan will be a compromise involving trade-offs. Certain individuals may be disadvantaged, others advantaged, but the community as a whole will be better off.

An important role of the management committee will be to assist in the presentation and resolution of conflicting desires and requirements on the part of various community groups and individuals. Public meetings, often spirited, are an important part of this process.