



Yarra Ranges Council Stormwater Policy

DRAFT

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Approved by Council:	<Date>
Responsible Officer:	
Department:	
Contact Officer:	

Revision history

Version	Date	Summary of revisions

Yarra Ranges Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri and other Kulin Nations as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of these lands. We pay our respects to all Elders, past, present, and emerging, who have been, and always will be, integral to the story of our region. We proudly share custodianship to care for Country together.

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1. Policy Statement

Water and flooding are inherent aspects of our natural environment, integral to our municipality's landscape. While we endeavour to enhance conditions during rainfall events, not all storms can be controlled, and not every issue has an engineering solution. We are committed to blending traditional wisdom with innovative approaches, respecting and preserving our land, water, and biodiversity.

Our goal is to minimise community hazards during extreme events. Through collaboration and education we empower individuals to embrace responsible stormwater management, fostering a culture of stewardship. We envision stormwater management as a catalyst for sustainable development and resilience.

Council acknowledges its significant stormwater assets base and the community's expectation of their appropriate management. As we navigate challenges such as ageing infrastructure and the impacts of climate change, we are committed to adopting a strategic, risk-based approach that prioritises catchment scale solutions alongside necessary localised interventions.

Our investment in stormwater assets reflects our responsibility to meet community expectations for effective management. This policy aims to improve stormwater and flood management, particularly for new developments, ensuring they integrate seamlessly with existing infrastructure without causing disruption or harm to our waterways.

Furthermore, we strive to promote green infrastructure, and reduce potable water consumption through innovative stormwater practices. We acknowledge the economic and social impacts of flooding on our community, underscoring the importance of proactive measures and community engagement in achieving sustainable stormwater resource management.

We leverage flood modelling and planning to identify and address flood risks, inform infrastructure improvements, and guide development in ways that enhance both community safety and environmental sustainability.

By planning strategically, investing in research, and fostering adaptability, we commit to building a resilient future and ensuring sustainable stormwater resource management in the Yarra Ranges municipality.

2. Purpose

Council manages and maintains stormwater assets to provide community with a safe reliable stormwater network. The purpose of this policy is to:

- define Council's scope, roles, and responsibilities it relates to stormwater management.

- outline Yarra Ranges Council's objectives for stormwater management
- assist Council, manage its legal drainage obligations
- outline Council's Stormwater Management approach

3. Scope

This policy has been prepared to ensure stormwater management and the protection of the Council stormwater system is appropriately considered and applies to:

- All activities related to Council stormwater assets and the overall stormwater network in the municipality.
- Design and construction of stormwater assets on private/ public land, which trigger Council approval.

This policy does not apply to:

- The assets or activity on land within other agencies (i.e. Melbourne Water, Department of Transport and Planning, Parks Victoria)
- The management of drainage infrastructure within private property that is not within a drainage easement.

4. Council's Drainage Roles and Responsibilities

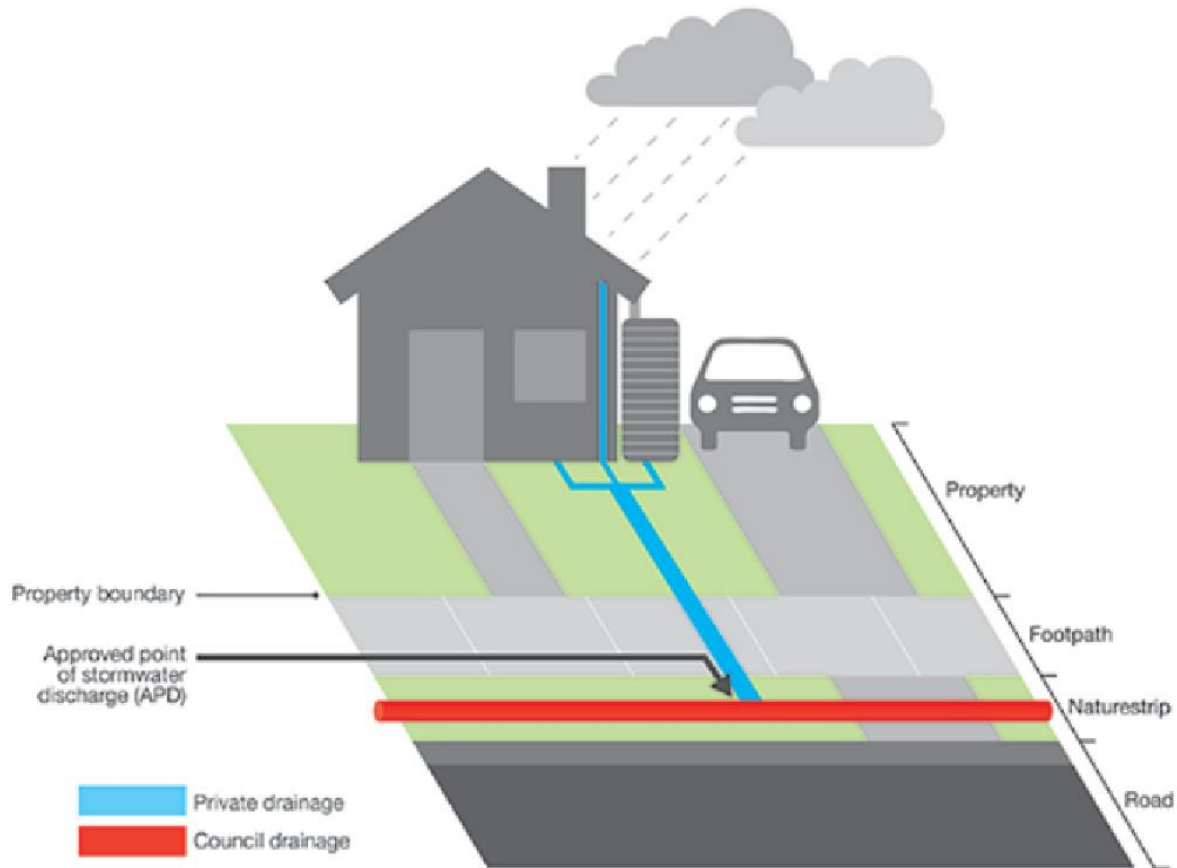
In accordance with various legislative requirements, Council assumes critical roles and responsibilities related to drainage systems within the community. These responsibilities are outlined below, reflecting the Council's commitment to effective water management, environmental protection, and ensuring the overall well-being of residents:

- **Local Drainage Authority under the *Water Act 1989***

As the local drainage authority under the *Water Act 1989*, the Council is entrusted with the vital task of managing drainage systems within its jurisdiction. This includes the planning, construction, and maintenance of drainage infrastructure to prevent flooding, manage stormwater runoff, and maintain water quality standards.

Stormwater nuisances from adjoining land is regulated under the *Water Act 1989*. Council is not designated under this legislation to enforce nuisance flooding compliance between two private properties and cannot request an adjoining owner to comply with this Act.

The landowners, developers, and body corporates are the responsible parties up to the Legal Point of Discharge, excluding cases where the asset falls within a drainage easement. A lot with no drainage is the responsibility of these parties. This is in accordance with Sections 15 to 21 and section 157(1) of the Water Act 1989



- **Empowered by the *Local Government Act 1989***

The Council operates under the powers bestowed upon it by the *Local Government Act 1989*. These powers enable the Council to provide comprehensive drainage systems that cater to the diverse needs of the community. This encompasses everything from the initial planning stages to the ongoing maintenance of drainage facilities.

- **Compliance with Building Regulations 2018**

Council fulfils its responsibilities under the Building Regulations 2018 by nominating appropriate stormwater discharge points for buildings and developments. By adhering to these regulations, the Council ensures that stormwater runoff from various structures is channelled responsibly, mitigating the risk of flooding and environmental harm.

- **Adherence to Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme Requirements**

Acting as a responsible authority under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, the Council follows the requirements outlined within the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme. These requirements mandate the achievement of specific stormwater quality targets for different types of developments. By enforcing these standards, the Council promotes sustainable development practices and safeguards the local environment.

- ***Environmental Protection Act 2017***

The Council upholds its general environmental duty under the *Environmental Protection Act 2017* by actively working to reduce the risk of activities that may harm the environment.

5. Council objectives for Stormwater Management

Council's Stormwater Management objectives are:

- All new stormwater assets and developments within Yarra Ranges Council are water sensitive, allowing them to be attractive, thrive and perform well now and into the future.
- Council and Melbourne Water continue efforts to rehabilitate, protect and enhance all waterways within the municipality.
- All new eligible developments achieve compliance with relevant best practice standards in Best Practice Environment Management Guidelines (BPEMG) and developments follow the Urban Stormwater Management Guidance.
- All new eligible development on public and private land does not adversely impact on the performance of the existing local stormwater drainage network.
- All new eligible development on public and private land does not cause detrimental increases in flows to downstream properties.
- All new capital stormwater works to be fit for purpose.
- Increase Council's knowledge of the current stormwater asset base and the existing and future flood risk across the municipality.
- Enhance communications with residents, landowners and developers who live and work within the municipality to clearly articulate issues, solutions, and responsibilities related to stormwater management and flooding.

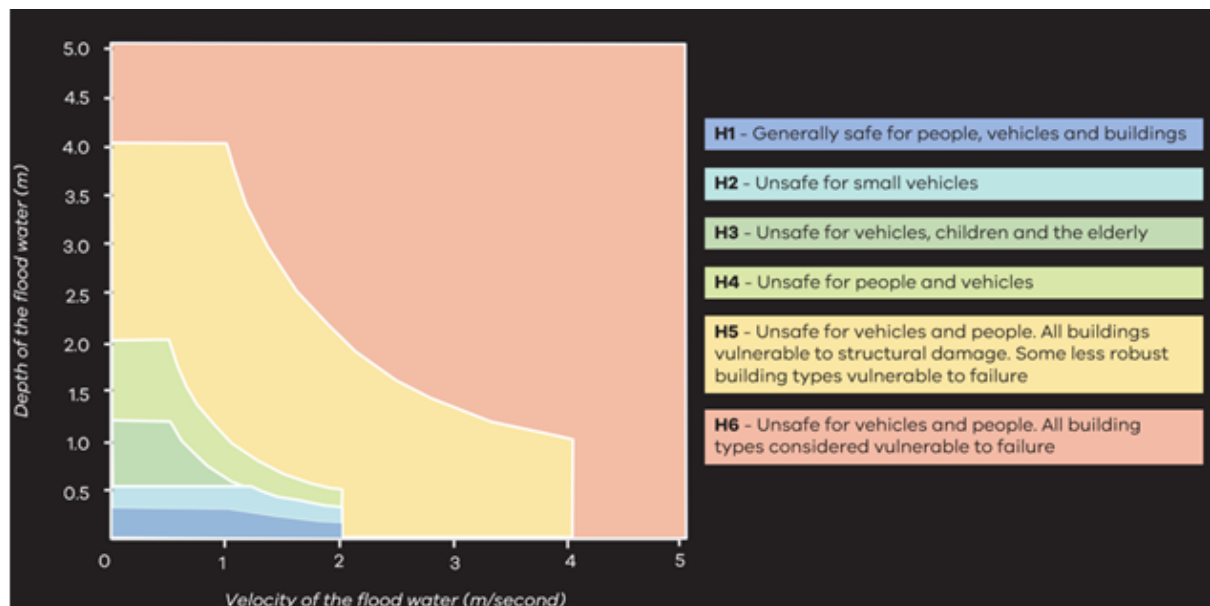
6. Stormwater Management within Yarra Ranges

Council's Stormwater Management Objectives specified in Section 5 are supported by the Stormwater Management approach described below.

6.1 Stormwater Management Plan 2024-2034

The Stormwater Management Plan 2024-2034 (SWMP) is a 10-year action plan addressing Council's stormwater management gaps. It provides a clear process for holistic stormwater management within the municipality. The SWMP will be used to:

- Develop a 10-year catchment flood mapping and stormwater strategy using a prioritised approach.
- Improve the drainage asset database and identify drainage constraints via flood modelling.
- Prioritise Council-led drainage projects based on flood risk levels.
- Analyse flooding depth, extent, and flood 'hazard' for various rainfall events, identifying affected buildings. Flood hazard categories ('H'1 to 'H'6') are shown below per the Australian Rainfall and Runoff Guidelines 2019.



- Identify natural flow paths and test larger Integrated Water Management (IWM) initiatives.
- Support efficient drainage maintenance through blockage analysis.

- Identify priority locations for integrated water management and Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) initiatives, aligning with Healthy Waterways Strategy targets.
- Create a 10-year action plan for stormwater and flood management, including community communication, strategic partnerships, funding review, and Integrated Water Management (IWM) / Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) improvements.

This program provides the basis for enabling a proactive approach to drainage and flood management within Yarra Ranges.

6.2 Yarra Ranges Development Engineering Guidelines

Council will use Yarra Ranges Development Engineering Guidelines to ensure developers and consultants understand stormwater requirements upfront. This facilitates efficient plan preparation, endorsement, and construction to sustainable standards. Guidelines are periodically reviewed for relevance and applied to:

- Communicate Council's stormwater management stance and its connections with policies and requirements.
- Inform the community of stormwater standards in new developments.
- Offer current technical guidance for consistent, site-specific stormwater plans.
- Clarify responsibilities between developers and the Council in stormwater asset management.
- Outline approval processes and communication points for efficient, equitable, and appropriate designs and approvals.

6.3 Water Sensitive Urban Design Guidelines

The Yarra Ranges Water Sensitive Urban Design Guidelines (The WSUD Guidelines) set the objectives around how stormwater quality assets are to be designed, constructed, and managed within the municipality. New stormwater quality assets may potentially be within private or public land and may be constructed as a part of land development or other capital projects.

Council will use the WSUD Guidelines in the following circumstances:

- To communicate Council's position on stormwater management and linkages with other policies, plans and requirements. The guidelines will set out Council's expectations for WSUD project within the municipality for Council staff, developers and residents.

- To clearly articulate the importance of stormwater quality improvement infrastructure in managing and enhancing the natural environment.
- To set required minimum treatment standards across the municipality.
- To provide up-to-date technical guidance on the design process of WSUD assets to ensure the expected performance targets are met now and into the future, and that maintenance responsibilities are detailed and clarified.
- To assist designers in selecting assets which are appropriate for site conditions, reflect the size and type of development or project, and respond to Council's other objectives, policies and plans.
- To provide guidance on the approval process for new WSUD assets.
- To draw links to other appropriate technical guidance documents and encourage continual improvement and innovation in responding to the unique constraints and opportunities within Yarra Ranges Council.

6.4 Management of Drainage and Flood Enquiries

Section 16 of the *Water Act 1989* identifies potential liability resulting from the unreasonable flow of water from land (including infrastructure) belonging to or under the management of Council on to any other land, where that flow causes or is likely to cause damage or injury to persons or property or causes a person to suffer economic loss.

Council is committed to meeting its legal obligations by ensuring drainage and flood enquiries are assessed against compliance requirements of various Acts, Regulations and Codes of Practice. Council will utilise a Risk Matrix approach to determine whether works should be initiated.

A customer may report any drainage issue to Council at any time and Council will register the issue to be investigated. Should a significant number of drainage issues be reported to Council over a short period of time, Council will prioritise the order of required investigations.

Each piece of information collated by the Infrastructure Services Department. Flood Modelling information will help categorise the drainage enquiries based on flood hazard (H1 to H6) as outlined above. This approach to drainage management will assist Council in ensuring that capital expenditure outlined within the Asset Management Plan is appropriately prioritised, addressing the greatest known severities first.

Funding for the provision and/or upgrade of drainage systems for the community will be through one or more of the following methods:

- Funds that are allocated by Council

- Developers, through development contribution arrangements and planning permit requirements
- A special charge scheme, under the provisions of the Local Government Act and Council’s special charge scheme policy
- Agreement by all parties to fund the works
- Grants, if they become available

The flood modelling program will assist with proactive and strategic management of the drainage infrastructure that is most critical to flood mitigation and management.

6.5 Drainage Network Maintenance

Maintenance of the stormwater network is undertaken as required within the municipality. The network is largely managed on a reactive basis in response to enquiries, requests, and complaints from the community.

Council also undertakes proactive inspections on drainage assets that have been identified by as having an increased risk of failure shown by past records of flooding issues.

The flood modelling program will assist with proactive maintenance of the drainage infrastructure that is most critical to flood mitigation and management.

7. Responsibilities

Responsible Party	Key Responsibilities for Stormwater Management
Chief Executive Officer - To act as principal advocate for stormwater management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a long-term strategic management focus is developed within Council • Support cross-organisational awareness and responsibilities for stormwater management. • Ensure appropriate integration across stormwater management, IWM, asset management, and financial planning. • Support an organisational culture of knowledge-sharing and collaboration. • Ensure legislative obligations and regulations are being met.
Managers and Executive Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge and take responsibility for their department’s role in stormwater management.

(across all relevant departments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain skilled and experienced staff and provide training on stormwater management when needed. • Monitor and report on their department's performance against actions identified in the Stormwater Management Plan
<p>Infrastructure Services Department</p> <p>(Council Officers)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the processes and requirements of the Engineering Development Design Guidelines and the Water Sensitive Urban Design Guidelines. • Provide technical advice to the Planning & Building Department about the appropriate stormwater works that should be required through a planning or building permit approval process. • Provide technical advice/information to applicants and other relevant parties at pre-application planning meetings and to the planning officer at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT). • Work with the Resilient Environment Team to determine IWM related opportunities such as precinct-scale stormwater harvesting and reuse or street-scale WSUD, • Manage and implement a program of investigative works to develop current flood and survey data for the municipality. • Use current flood and drainage capacity information to inform advice to the Planning & Building Department. • Receive and assess drainage complaints from the community and gather intelligence on the performance of the drainage and stormwater network following significant events. • Meet regularly with Planning and Building to discuss the process and work collaboratively on areas of potential improvement in line with the objectives of this Policy.
<p>Planning & Building Department</p> <p>(Council Officers)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alert applicants and proponents to the requirements of the Engineering Development Design Guidelines 2024 and associated reference documents before and during planning and building application processes. • Implement the processes and requirements of the Engineering Development Design Guidelines 2024 • Refer eligible planning applications to the Infrastructure Services Department for review and comment.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet regularly with Infrastructure Services to discuss the process and work collaboratively on areas of potential improvement in line with the objectives of this Policy.
Resilient Environment Team (Council Officers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Infrastructure Services Department to determine IWM related opportunities such as precinct-scale stormwater harvesting and reuse or street-scale WSUD. • Meet regularly with Infrastructure Services to discuss the process and work collaboratively on areas of potential improvement in line with the objectives of this Policy.

8. Definitions

The following definitions are to be used when interpreting and applying this Policy:

Benefit Cost Ratio	An assessment based on the benefit in reducing or eliminating impacts of a drainage system by providing an upgrade of that system versus the costs of the upgrade works.
Council	Yarra Ranges Council
Eligible Development	A development that requires planning permission under the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme and is subject to stormwater management objectives or requirements; or stormwater works being carried out by or on behalf of Council.
Water Sensitive	The knowledge and desire to make wise choices about water and an understanding of the value of our waterways and value of fit for use water. It ensures that urban water management is sensitive to natural hydrological and ecological processes.
WSUD	Water Sensitive Urban Design is an approach to minimise harmful effects to the environment when designing drainage systems

9. Review Period

This policy is reviewed every 4 years by 31 October in the year following a Council election.