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The Lower Macleay Flood Risk Management Study and Plan

Protecting our future against flood events.

How should we manage risks for future flood events and how can we better plan and prepare for future flood events?

Kempsey township and the downstream communities of Frederickton, Gladstone and Smithtown have long been regarded as among Australia's most high-risk flood impact locations. The Lower Macleay River floodplain occupies an approximately 500km² of coastal floodplain downstream of Kempsey, to the Macleay River's main outlet at South West Rocks. The floodplain drains an upstream catchment area of 11,500km² and also has several secondary outlets to the ocean at Hat Head, Crescent Head, Ryans Cut and South West Rocks and a hydraulic link to the Maria River and Hastings River to the south, all owing to improved channel linkages constructed during historic flood mitigation schemes.

Project Summary

in 2019, Kempsey Shire Council prepared a flood study for the Lower Macleay to investigate mainstream flood behaviour in the broader Lower Macleay floodplain including villages and urban areas. This next stage includes the creation of a Flood Risk Management Study and Plan which identifies priority risk reduction measures for further investigation and implementation under the Flood Risk Management Program.

The project is now at the stage of seeking feedback on proposed mitigation options for Council to investigate going forward. There are 15 options for community input.

The options include:

1. Raising Crescent Head Road at the Corduroy.
2. Raising Crescent Head Road at Rudders Lagoon.
3. Dredging of the Macleay River
4. Disconnecting Korogoro Creek and Killick Creek from the Floodplain
5. Reinstate Rowes Cut
6. New Ocean Outlets
7. Modification of the way Council operate the Flood Control Structures
8. Increase the Floodplain Drainage Capacity – (Floodgate and Drains)
9. Hat Head Road Floodway (Dairy)

10. Increased drainage capacity at Clybucca Floodplain
11. Increased Drainage Capacity – Ryans Cut (Loftus Road)
12. Increased Floodplain Drainage Capacity – Enlarge the Headworks on Belmore and Kinchela Creek.
13. Raise and Extend Smithtown Levee.
14. Raise other Levees to design levels and infill low sections.
15. Removal of Clybucca Headworks.

How you can get involved

We understand that many in our community have been impacted by flood events and value the opportunity to share their experiences and knowledge to help ensure our community remains safe during future flood events.

On Friday, 15 March, a Community Workshop was held at Smithtown Hall from 10am to 1pm to discuss a range of flood mitigation options. We appreciate everyone who attended and contributed to these important discussions.

Thank you also to those who took the time to complete the Flood Mitigation Options Survey. Your feedback is invaluable.