9.4.2. Response Modification - Evacuation Planning (RM – RB02)

DESCRIPTION

Significant property inundation in a rare flood may force residents to evacuate their homes. Residents will either leave of their own accord, as they feel their property is uninhabitable, or they will be issued an evacuation order. The SES has responsibility for evacuating people due to flooding. The sudden nature of flooding in the catchment means little to no warning is available for a flood event, and so the evacuation would almost certainly take place during or after the storm event.

DISCUSSION

The main issues with all flood evacuations are:

- · they must be carried out quickly and efficiently,
- they are hazardous for both rescuers and evacuees,
- residents are generally reluctant to leave their homes, causing delays and placing more stress on the rescuers,
- people do not appreciate the dangers of crossing floodwaters.

The nature of flooding in Rushcutters Bay creates additional issues for evacuation. These include:

- The short duration of flooding in the catchment means that the evacuation itself will be of comparable time to remaining indoors and waiting for the flood to recede.
- The limited warning time means that many residents may evacuate at the same time, creating gridlock and placing them in a more dangerous situation than not evacuating. Furthermore, areas that require evacuation the most (i.e. where significant depths occur) will likely not be accessible in a standard vehicle, forcing residents to leave on foot.

EVALUATION

Evacuation of residents in the catchment has significant associated risks and may increase the flood risk in the brief time (typically, hours) that residents are flood affected. Furthermore, the more widespread the evacuation is, the greater the risk of gridlock and people becoming stranded. In general, evacuation should not be undertaken, unless there is exceptionally hazardous flooding at a property.

9.4.3. Response Modification - Public Information and Raising Flood Awareness (RM – RB03)

DESCRIPTION

A community with high flood awareness will suffer less damage and disruption during and after a flood because people are knowledgeable about the flood and what is required of them. The success of any flood warning system and the evacuation process depends on:

Flood Awareness: How aware is the community to the threat of flooding? Has it been adequately informed or educated?

Flood Preparedness: How prepared is the community to react to the threat? Do they (or the SES) have damage minimisation strategies (such as sand bags, raising possessions) which can be implemented?

Flood Evacuation: How prepared are the authorities and the residents to evacuate households to minimise damages and the potential risk to life? How will the evacuation be done, where will the evacuees be moved to?

DISCUSSION

In catchments which regularly flood, there is often a large, local, unofficial warning network which has developed over the years and residents know how to effectively respond to warnings by raising goods, moving cars, lifting carpets, etc. The level of trauma or anxiety may be reduced as people have "survived" previous floods and know how to handle both the immediate emergency and the post rehabilitation phase in a calm and efficient manner.

The level of flood awareness within a community is difficult to evaluate. It will vary over time and depends on a number of factors including:

- Frequency and impact of previous floods. A major flood causing a high degree of flood damage in relatively recent times will increase flood awareness. If no floods have occurred, or there have been a number of small floods which cause little damage or inconvenience, then the level of flood awareness may be low. In Rushcutters Bay, there is little experience of flooding that has caused major disruption to residents (e.g. overfloor flooding). There are, however, localised hotspots that have a high awareness of flooding, for example in Victoria Street.
- History of residence. Families who have owned properties for a long time will
 have established a considerable depth of knowledge regarding flooding and a
 high level of flood awareness. A community which consists predominantly of short
 lease rental homes will have a low level of flood awareness. As discussed in
 Section 4.1.2, a high portion of residents have only recently moved into the
 catchment and the most residents live in rented accommodation.
- Whether an effective public awareness has been implemented. It is understood
 that no large scale awareness program has been implemented in the catchment.
 However, flooding information is available via the publicly available Flood Study
 (Reference 2) completed for the catchment, and residents are well informed of
 the floodplain risk management process through newsletters sent out as part of
 each study.

For flood risk management to be effective it must become the responsibility of the whole community. It is difficult to accurately assess the benefits of an awareness program but it is generally considered that the benefits far outweigh the costs. The perceived value of information and levels of awareness diminishes as the time since the last flood increases. Often a major

hurdle is convincing residents that major floods, larger than those previously experienced, will occur in the future. Table 22 lists tools that can be used to promote public awareness of flooding in an area.

Table 22: Public Information Tools

Method	Comment
Letter/Pamphlet from Council	These may be sent annually or biannually with the rate notice or separately. The pamphlet can inform residents of subsidies, changes to flood levels or any other relevant information.
School Project or Local Historical Society	This provides an excellent means of informing the younger generation about flooding. It may involve talks from various authorities and can be combined with topics relating to the natural environment, etc.
Displays at Libraries / community centres	This is an inexpensive, passive, way of informing the community and may be combined with related information.
Historical Flood Markers	Signs or marks can be prominently displayed on telegraph poles or such like to indicate the level reached in previous floods. Depth indicators advice of potential hazards.
Articles in Local Newspapers	Ongoing articles in newspapers will ensure that the problem is not forgotten. Historical features and remembrance of the anniversary of past events make good copy.
Collection of Data from Future Floods	Collection of data assists in reinforcing to the residents that Council is aware of the problem and ensures that the design flood levels are as accurate as possible.
Types of Information Available	Council may wish to advice interested parties on the flood information currently available and how it can be obtained at cost when they inquire during the property purchase process.
Establishment of Flood Affectation Database	A database would provide information on (say) which houses require evacuation, which public structures will be affected (e.g. telephone or power cuts). This database should be reviewed after each flood event.
Flood Preparedness Program	Providing information to the community regarding flooding helps to inform it of the problem and associated implications. However, it does not necessarily adequately prepare people to react effectively to the problem. A Flood Preparedness Program, led by the SES would ensure that the community is adequately prepared.
Foster Community Ownership of the Problem	Flood damages in future events can be minimised if the community is aware of the problem and takes steps to find solutions. Residents have a responsibility to advice Council if they see a problem such as potential debris blockage.

EVALUATION

A program aimed at raising flood awareness in the catchment is a cost-effective measure that will reduce the flood risk in the area. There is generally little perception of the risk of high hazard flooding in the area. In similar studies in urban areas that are not perceived as having a flood issue, photos of historical floods communicate well the possible floods that can occur.

9.4.4. Response Modification – Local Flood Plan and DISPLAN (RM – RB04)

DESCRIPTION

As described previously, it may be necessary for a small number of residents to evacuate their

homes in a major flood. This would usually be undertaken under the authority of the lead agency under the DISPLAN, the SES. Based on the duration of flooding in the catchment (typically, hours) and the risks associated with evacuation, it may be that evacuation is undertaken on a case by case basis. Some residents may choose to leave on their own accord based on flood information from the radio or other warnings, and may be assisted by local residents.

The preparation of a flood emergency response plan aims to minimise the risk associated with evacuations (described in Section 9.4.2) by providing information regarding evacuation routes, refuge areas, and generally what processes should be followed in a flood. It is the role of the SES to develop this plan for flood-affected communities.

DISCUSSION

As recommended in Section 6.2, a DISPLAN should be prepared for the Sydney East Emergency Management District (of which the Rushcutters Bay catchment is part of) to outline emergency response arrangement specific to the district. In particular the purpose of a District DISPLAN is to:

- Identify responsibilities at a District and Local level in regards to the prevention, preparation, response and recovery for each type of emergency situation likely to affect the district;
- Detail arrangements for coordinating resource support during emergency operations at both a District and Local level;
- Outline the tasks to be performed in the event of an emergency at a District and Local level;
- Specifies the responsibilities of the East Metropolitan District Emergency Operations Controller and Local Emergency Operations Controllers within the District;
- Detail the responsibilities for the identification, development and implementation of prevention and mitigation strategies;
- Detail the responsibilities of the District and Local Emergency Management Committees within the District;
- Detail agreed Agency and Functional Area roles and responsibilities in preparation for, response to and recovery from, emergencies;
- Outline the control, coordination and liaison arrangements at District and Local levels;
- Detail arrangements for the acquisition and coordination of resources;
- Detail public warning systems and responsibility for implementation;
- Detail public information arrangements and public education responsibilities;
- Specifies arrangements for reporting before, during and after an operation; and
- Detail the arrangements for the review, testing, evaluation and maintenance of the Plan.

Further, it is recommended that the SES prepare a Local Flood Plan in conjunction with the City of Sydney (who shall supply the necessary data) to outline the following details:

 Evacuation centres in close proximity to the floodplain which are flood free sites with flood free access;

- Organise use of Variable Message Signs for use during a flood event for flood affected roads (specifically recommended in Section 9.4.1).
- Inclusion of a description of local flooding conditions;
- Identification of potentially flood affected vulnerable facilities; and
- Identification of key access road subject to flooding.

Details of access road flooding and recommended inclusions for the flood plan are provided in Section 6.

Although flood warning is limited, a local disaster plan should be continually updated to include the latest information on design flood levels and details on roads, properties, and other facilities which would be flood affected.

OUTCOME

The SES should ensure that a DISPLAN be prepared for the Sydney East Emergency Management District, and Council, with the help of the SES should prepare a Local Flood Plan for the study catchment. This should also take into account those properties not directly flood affected but which may have had access cut and become flood islands. These plans should be regularly kept up to date and should include feedback from recent major flood events and the recommendations of this Study once finalised.

9.4.5. Property Modification - Flood Planning Levels (PM – RB01)

DESCRIPTION

The flood planning level (FPL) is used to define land subject to flood related development controls and is generally adopted as the minimum level to which floor levels in the flood affected areas must be built. The FPL includes a freeboard above the design flood level. It is common practice to set minimum floor levels for residential buildings, garages, driveways and even commercial floors as this reduces the frequency and extent of flood damages. Freeboards provide reasonable certainty that the reduced level of risk exposure selected (by deciding upon a particular event to provide flood protection for) is actually provided.

DISCUSSION

The main aim of the FPLs is to reduce the damages experienced by the property owner during a flood. Elevating a house floor level above the FPL will ensure that flood damages are significantly reduced. Council have specified FPL requirements in their *Interim Floodplain Management Policy* (Reference 5) prior to the completion of the Floodplain Risk Management Plans for the entire LGA and we endorse this move. It is important that the same requirements are applied throughout the LGA to new development or redevelopments regardless of whether the Floodplain Risk Management Plan have been completed for the catchment or not.

EVALUATION

A review of the FPLs put forward by Council in their *Interim Floodplain Management Policy* (Reference 5) was carried out as part of this study. In order to ensure consistency throughout the LGA, the same principle for FPLs should be applied regardless of whether a Floodplain Risk

Management Plan have been completed for the catchment or not. The only exception would be if the Floodplain Risk Management Plan proposes a change to these FPLs.

9.4.6. Property Modification - Flood Proofing (PM – RB02)

DESCRIPTION

Flood Proofing involves the sealing of entrances, windows, vents, etc., to prevent or limit the ingress of floodwaters. It is only suitable for brick buildings with concrete floors and can prevent ingress for outside depths of approximately one metre. Greater depths may cause collapse of the structure unless water is allowed to enter.

DISCUSSION

In general, flood proofing requires sealing of doors (new frame, seal and door); sealing and rerouting of ventilation gaps in brickwork; sealing of all underfloor entrances and checking of brickwork to ensure that there are no gaps or weaknesses in the mortar. It will not reduce the flood hazard, and in fact may increase the true hazard if residents stay in their houses and a large flood eventually inundates the building. A typical benefit/cost ratio is high and there are no significant environmental and social problems.

An assessment of the variation in types of flood proofing, the flood depths to which can be protected, and the costs involved, is required before the option can be fully recommended. Past experience indicates that some types of flood proofing are affordable relative to the cost of flooding, for example, in some cases, an existing house could be sealed for approximately \$20,000. In the case of a new house of extension, the cost of flood proofing would be less if included as part of the construction. There is also variation in the types of property that can be proofed, for example, it is easier to apply to commercial premises where there are only one or two entrances, and maintenance and operation procedures can be better enforced.

EVALUATION

Preliminary assessment has indicated that flood proofing is a good solution to reducing flood risk to commercial and industrial properties. Based on previous experience, the option can be cost-effective relative to drainage upgrades or other structural works, and easier to implement. Further assessment should be undertaken to ascertain the depth of ponding that flood proofing can protect against, what types of properties can be flood-proofed, the variation in cost for different cases, where responsibility lies for carrying out and funding the works, and any associated risks with the approach.

9.4.7. Property Modification – Feasibility Study for City of Sydney Flood Proofing (PM – RB03)

DESCRIPTION

As discussed in the previous option, flood proofing involves modifications to a building's exterior in order to prevent the ingress of floodwater. Where flood proofing is not undertaken by property owners, it may be possible for City of Sydney to undertake mitigation works if the property is put up for sale. That is, for a severely flood affected properties, City of Sydney may purchase the

property so that works on it can be undertaken, and then the property is put up for sale soon after. Such a scheme would be most suited to areas with significant overfloor flood affectation where structural measures (for example, drainage upgrades) are not feasible.

DISCUSSION

A Council-led program that involves the purchase, renovation and selling of flood-affected land is a straightforward variation on other Council-led property modification measures, and will provide benefit to properties that do not have other available options. The nature of the flood issue in Rushcutters Bay is that although there is significant overfloor flood affectation, it is concentrated in several localised areas. This makes structural options difficult to justify, and it is possible that a property's flood risk will remain indefinitely.

As the option can only be implemented when an affected property is put on sale, such a program's implementation would be very gradual and would be undertaken over a long period of time. In this sense, the option is an extension of Council's FPL policy, whereby minimum floor levels are required when a flood-affected property is re-developed. A Council-led flood proofing program would account for the flood affected properties that are not re-developed and therefore would not otherwise have their floor levels raised.

Although such a program has some similarity to a voluntary purchase scheme, it would be markedly less obtrusive and would not reduce the number of dwellings in the catchment. Voluntary purchase involves returning severely-affected land on a floodway to the floodplain, whereas in Rushcutters Bay, affected properties are not necessarily on a floodway and restoring an area's natural flowpath (for example, in a trapped depression) would adversely impact downstream properties and may impact an area's streetscape and character. Most significantly, a flood proofing program would only involve properties that are available for purchase, meaning there would be no disruption to the existing property market. This would be further ensured by having no publicly available information on which properties would be targeted by such a program.

EVALUATION

A flood proofing program undertaken by the City of Sydney could significantly alleviate property affectation and give Council an alternative to drainage upgrades in areas where they are prohibitively expensive and not cost-effective. It would also allow Council to extend their objective of raising flood affected properties (via an FPL) to affected properties by improving properties that may not otherwise have their floor level raised. Although such a program has several apparent benefits, its feasibility should be investigated further to determine whether it can be cost-effective (based on the cost of purchasing, flood-proofing and re-selling a property compared to the existing economic cost of flooding) and what social impacts may exist.

9.4.8. Property Modification - Development Control Planning (PM – RB04)

DESCRIPTION

The catchment's location in inner Sydney means there is continuing pressures for both redevelopments of existing buildings as well as for new developments. The strategic

assessment of flood risk can prevent development occurring in areas with a high hazard and/or with the potential to have significant impacts upon flood behaviour in other areas. It can also reduce the potential damage to new or redeveloped properties likely to be affected by flooding to acceptable levels.

DISCUSSION

The Interim Floodplain Management Policy (Reference 5) provides general requirements for new developments on flood liable land within the catchment, Flood Planning Level requirements for different development types and guidelines on flood compatible materials. This document serves as an interim policy for managing floodplain within the Council LGA which will be withdrawn once Council complete Floodplain Risk Management Plans for the entire LGA and then integrate outcomes from these plans into planning controls. A review of this document as well as the Sydney LEP 2012 and Sydney DCP 2012 has been undertaken and discussed in Section 7.1.2. Nevertheless the success of these policies can only be determined once implemented and specific problems/issues addressed as they arise.

OUTCOME

Recommendation for an update of the planning documents (i.e. Sydney DCP 2012 and Sydney LEP 2012) has been discussed in Section 7.2 in order to inform of the development controls as published in the Interim Floodplain Management Policy (Reference 5). Inclusion of these provisions would ensure that the controls can be enforced which also take into consideration the potential impact of climate change.

9.5. Assessment Matrix

Multi-variate decision matrices are recommended in the Floodplain Development Manual (Reference 1) and therefore it is also a recommendation of this report that multi-variate decision matrices be developed for specific management areas, allowing detailed benefit/cost estimates, community involvement in determining social and other intangible values, and local assessment of environmental impacts.

The criteria assigned a value in the management matrix are:

- Risk to life;
- Impact on flood behaviour (reduction in flood level, hazard or hydraulic categorisation) over the range of flood events;
- Number of properties benefited by measure;
- Technical feasibility (design considerations, construction constraints, long-term performance);
- Community acceptance and social impacts;
- Economic merits (capital and recurring costs versus reduction in flood damages);
- Financial feasibility to fund the measure;
- Long term performance;
- Environmental and ecological benefits;
- Impacts on the State Emergency Services;

- Political and/or administrative issues; and
- Long-term performance given the potential impacts of climate change.

The scoring system for the above criteria is provided in Table 23 and largely relates to the impacts in a 1% AEP event. The matrix below is designed to set out a general scheme to illustrate how a local matrix might be developed. These criteria and their relative weighting may be adjusted in the light of community consultations and local conditions.

Tangible costs and damages are also used as the basis of B/C analysis for some measures. Table 23: Matrix Scoring System

SCORE:	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
Impact on Flood Behaviour	>100mm increase	50 to 100mm increase	<50mm increase	no change	<50mm decrease	50 to 100mm decrease	>100mm decrease
Number of Properties Benefited	>5 adversely affected	2-5 adversely affected	<2 adversely affected	none	<2	2 to 5	>5
Technical Feasibility	major issues	moderate issues	minor issues	neutral	moderately straight- forward	Straight- forward	no issues
Community Acceptance	majority against	most against	some against	neutral	minor	most	majority
Economic Merits	major disbenefit	moderate disbenefit	minor disbenefit	neutral	low	medium	high
Financial Feasibility	major disbenefit	moderate disbenefit	minor disbenefit	neutral	low	medium	high
Environmental & Ecological Benefits	major disbenefit	moderate disbenefit	minor disbenefit	neutral	low	medium	high
Impacts on SES	major disbenefit	moderate disbenefit	minor disbenefit	neutral	minor benefit	moderate benefit	major benefit
Political / administrative Issues	major negative	moderate negative	minor negative	neutral	few	very few	none
Long Term Performance	major disbenefit	moderate disbenefit	minor disbenefit	neutral	positive	good	excellent
Risk to Life	major increase	moderate increase	minor increase	neutral	minor benefit	moderate benefit	major benefit

A draft assessment matrix has been included in the following section. It will be updated for the final report with the results of the community consultation.

9.5.1. Results

The assessment matrix is given in Table 24, with each of the assessed management options scored against the range of criteria. 'Community Acceptance' has not been scored at this time, as the community information session is yet to be held (the matrix will be updated when the information is available). Also, it is important to note that the approach undertaken does not provide an absolute "right" answer as to what should be included in the Management Plan but is rather for the purpose of providing an easy framework for comparing the various options on an issue by issue basis which stakeholders can then use to make a decision. For the same reason, the total score given to each option, and the subsequent rank, is only an indicator to be used for general comparison.

Table 24: Multi-Criteria Assessment of Management Options

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Community Acceptance		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	A/N		N/A	A/A	A/N	N/A		A/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
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(93A) Jnev3 ngise0		10%	10%	10%	5%, 10%	2%	Response Modification Measure	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	roperty Modification Measures	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Section in Report	Flood Modification Measures	9.3.1	9.3.2	9.3.3	9.3.4	9.3.5	Res	9.4.1	9.4.2	9.4.3	9.4.4	Pro	9.4.5	9.4.6	9.4.7	9.4.8
Options		Trunk Drainage Upgrade - Boundary Street	Trunk Drainage Upgrade - Boundary Street to Weigall Sportsground	Trunk Drainage Upgrade - Taylor, Sims and Sturt Street	Trunk Drainage Upgrade - Taylor Street to Boundary Street	Trunk Drainage Upgrade - Victoria Street South		Variable Message Display		Public Information and Raising Flood Awareness	Local Flood Plan and DISPLAN		Flood Planning Levels	Investigate Flood Proofing	Voluntary Purchase	Development Control Planning
Ref		FM-RB01	FM-RB02	FM-RB03	FM-RB04	FM-RB05		RM-RB01	RM- RB 02	RM-RB03	RM-RB04		PM-RB01	PM-RB02	PM-RB03	PM-RB04

^{*&#}x27;Community Acceptance' will be completed following a community information session as part of the Public Exhibition

As shown in the matrix, the structural measures have both higher and lower scores (i.e. more '3' and '-3' scores) than the response and property modification measures – due to their larger costs and larger benefits. For example, the first four options rate highly regarding impact on flood behaviour and the number of properties benefitted; however, the same four have low technical and financial feasibility (as they require large scale upgrades and significant capital outlays) and have potential political or administrative issues (as they affect a number of internal and external stakeholders). Overall, these structural options score lower than the other measures; however, they rank only just below some of the non-structural measures and should be considered as generally equivalent under this assessment (specifically FM-RB01 and FM-RB02).

The five highest ranking measures scored between 9 and 11, which indicates that they are all generally equivalent under this assessment. They all require relatively little financial outlay, and will lower the economic cost of flooding in the catchment. Public information and flood awareness also scores well, but ranks lower due to its limited long term performance, an issue also associated with evacuation planning. Voluntary purchase is difficult to justify as it is has issues with its technical feasibility, in that it would be very different to a typical VP scheme, and the political/administrative issues associated with buying flood-affected houses.

Based on the matrix, the options for future implementation are ranked in the order as tabulated in Table 25.

Table 25: Ranking of Management Options

Rank	Ref	Options	Score
1	RM-RB04	Local Flood Plan and DISPLAN	11
2=	PM-RB02	Investigate Flood Proofing	10
2=	RM-RB01	Variable Message Display	10
2=	PM-RB04	Development Control Planning	10
5	PM-RB01	Flood Planning Levels	9
6	RM-RB03	Public Information and Raising Flood Awareness	6
7	RM-RB02	Evacuation Planning	5
8	FM-RB02	Trunk Drainage Upgrade - Boundary Street to Weigall Sportsground	4
9	FM-RB01	Trunk Drainage Upgrade - Boundary Street	3
10	FM-RB04	Trunk Drainage Upgrade - Taylor Street to Boundary Street	1
11	PM-RB02	Voluntary Purchase	0
12	FM-RB03	Trunk Drainage Upgrade - Taylor, Sims and Sturt Street	-2
13	FM-RB05	Trunk Drainage Upgrade - Victoria Street South	-3

Note: '=' denotes equal position. E.g. '3=' refers to equal third rank.

Of the 13 management options presented here, 12 have been recommended for implementation as part of the Rushcutters Bay Catchment Floodplain Risk Management Plan. The discarded option is FM-RB03, which has an adverse impact downstream of the upgrade that increases downstream flood risk by an unacceptable amount.

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