10.5.3 Adoption of Horsley Creek Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan

Directorate: Infrastructure Services
Business Unit: Technical and Recreation Services

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek Council adoption of the Horsley Creek Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan.

The draft Study and Plan was placed on public exhibition for a period of 28 days in June 2025, and submissions received during this period have been reviewed and considered in the final Study and Plan. Once adopted, the final Study and Plan will become a policy position of Council.

Recommendation

That Council adopts the Horsley Creek Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan.

Background

The Horsley Creek Catchment lies south of Lake Illawarra and east of the Albion Park Airport. The catchment covers approximately 963 ha, and encompasses the suburbs of Albion Park Rail, Oak Flats, Blackbutt, Croom and Albion Park; as illustrated in **Attachment 1**.

The Draft FRMS&P was endorsed by Council in May 2025 for public exhibition, following internal and agency review. The draft was exhibited from 2 to 30 June 2025, promoted through Council's "Let's Chat Shellharbour" webpage, local media, social channels, and letterbox drops to flood-affected properties. Additionally two community drop-in sessions were held at the Shellharbour Civic Centre on 11 June 2025, which were well attended and provided an opportunity for residents to speak directly with Council officers and the project consultants.

During the exhibition period, Council received eight written submissions, four through the online platform and four via email or letter.

Key themes raised through submissions and at the drop-in sessions included:

1. **Maintenance**
    - Residents expressed the desire for improved maintenance of creeks and stormwater drainage systems, particularly vegetation and debris removal to prevent blockages
2. **Development Concerns**
    - There were concerns raised regarding new development and its potential to exacerbate local flooding.
3. **Communications**
    - Residents requested clearer flood mapping and communication of flood risks and planning controls.
4. **Technical Queries**
    - Questions were received regarding how the Defined Flood Event (DFE) and Flood Planning Area (FPA) were determined, including the consideration of climate change.
5. **General Support**
    - There was support for local flood mitigation measures, such as the Tongarra Road Detention Basin, Pioneer Drive diversion works, and improved emergency access along Industrial Road.

All feedback was reviewed and considered in finalising the Study and Plan. As a result of community input the changes are detailed below:

- Recommended flood mitigation measures were refined, including enhanced vegetation management and maintenance programs for key drainage lines.
- Flood Planning Area mapping, Defined Flood Event parameters, and related development controls were clarified and updated to improve transparency.
- Proposed mitigation priorities were confirmed, with minor adjustments made to reflect community feedback about local access and property impacts.

The final Study and Plan reflects both technical best practice and community input, ensuring that Council's flood risk management approach for the Horsley Creek catchment is locally informed, climate-resilient, consistent with regional floodplain management frameworks, and site-specific conditions.

Council Implications

FINANCIAL / RESOURCES

The Horsley Creek Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan project is grant funded by the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (formerly Department of Planning and Environment) based on a 2:1 funding agreement, meaning the state government provides $2 for every $1 contributed by Council.

The Study and Plan identifies a number of management and mitigation measures to address the flood risk within the catchment. However, implementation of a number of actions will be a shared responsibility between Council, a number of NSW State Agencies and private landowners. Projects will be implemented when resources and funding is available.

In addition, with the adoption of a final Floodplain Risk Management Plan, Council will be able to apply for grant funding under the NSW Floodplain Management Program to implement the measures identified in the final plan and in accordance with State Government priorities. The future financial considerations will be identified in Council Delivery Programs.

LEGISLATION AND POLICY (INCLUDING ADVOCACY, STRATEGIC AND OTHER PLANS)

Council has a statutory responsibility for land use planning and management under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. Council's planning responsibilities include management of flood prone land in accordance with its flood susceptibility. Council's policies are required to be consistent with state planning policy which in respect to flooding is outlined in the NSW Government's Flood Risk Management Manual.

The Horsley Creek Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan (**Attachment 2**) has been developed in a manner consistent with the NSW Flood Prone Land Policy and the NSW Floodplain Management Process.

SOCIAL IMPACT

The intent of the NSW Government's Flood Prone Land Policy and Flood Risk Management Process as outlined in the Manual, is to reduce the impact of flooding and flood liability on individual owners and occupiers of flood prone land and to reduce private and public losses resulting from flooding.

The public exhibition of the Horsley Creek Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan (**Attachment 2**) was conducted in June for 28 days. This process helped raise public awareness of flooding within the catchment and supported

Council and key emergency personnel in improving community preparedness for the risks associated with flooding.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Council's Climate and Sustainability Policy outlines Council's commitment to applying sustainability principles into decision-making processes across the organisation that integrate climate risk assessment into decision making to build resilience into strategic planning, development activities, projects and asset management.

The Horsley Creek Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan defines the current and future flood risk to the community and identifies a number of actions to inform future development and flood response in accordance with modelled data.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Not Applicable

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

- Business Risk - The findings of the Study and Plan will be used to better plan for and manage natural flooding hazards within the Horsley Creek catchment and by doing so will ensure better continuity of services.
- WHS and Public Risk - Implementing the actions identified within the Study and Plan will help to reduce risks to the public from flooding as well as improve safety of staff responding during flood events.
- Environmental Risk - The Study and Plan responds to environmental risk and potential impacts of climate change to Council and the community. The proposed actions within the Study and Plan seek to minimise environmental risk and to ensure the community is resilient to flood risk, now and into the future.
- Delivery Program Risk - Once adopted, actions from the Study and Plan will be prioritised and programmed into future delivery programs. Resourcing and funding will also be subject to future grant funding opportunities as appropriate.

Link to Community Strategic Plan

This report supports the following objectives, strategies and actions of the Community Strategic Plan:

2.2 We are a beautiful and connected City

2.2.1 Our planning reflects the unique character of our city and natural environment and is responsive to the evolving needs of our community

2.1.1.07 Manage stormwater and floodplains across the City by developing strategies and plans that inform the community and increase resilience

Previous Council Resolutions

26 April 2016
11 October 2016
17 December 2019
27 May 2025

Consultation

Internal

Coastal and Flood Risk Management Advisory Committee
Executive Manager Strategic Planning and Environment
Executive Manager Works and Services
Manager Asset Planning
Manager Environment
Construction and Maintenance Manager
Senior Strategic Planner

External

NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

Public Exhibition for Draft FRMS&P

The Draft Horsley Creek Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan (FRMS&P) was publicly exhibited from 2 to 30 June 2025 following endorsement by Council, Consultation via the former Flood Risk Management Committee (now Coastal and Flood Risk Management Advisory Committee), and technical review by the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW). The exhibition was promoted through Council's "Let's Chat Shellharbour" webpage, social media, local media, and letterbox drops to properties within the flood-affected area. Two community drop-in sessions were held at the Shellharbour Civic Centre on 11 June 2025, attended by 49 people. The exhibition attracted 905 webpage views and eight written submissions, with key feedback focusing on stormwater maintenance, development impacts, and flood planning levels. Community input informed updates to the final FRMS&P, ensuring that recommended flood mitigation

measures and planning controls align with local priorities and site-specific conditions.

Political Donations Disclosure

Nil

Options

Council adopts the Horsley Creek Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan, prepared by Worley Consulting (2025).

Conclusion

The draft Horsley Creek Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan was placed on public exhibition for a period of 28 days in June 2025. The exhibition period has now concluded, and the submissions received have been reviewed and considered in final Study and Plan. A final report is now presented (**Attachment 2**) for adoption. Once adopted, the Horsley Creek Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan will become a policy position of Council.

Attachments

1. Horsley Creek Catchment
2. Horsley Creek Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan