



Hon Harriet Shing MP

Minister for Housing
Minister for Water
Minister for Equality

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Ellen Sandell MP
Member for Melbourne
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Dear Ms Sandell

KENSINGTON BANKS FLOOD ZONE RE-MODELLING

Thank you for your correspondence of 27 May 2024 to the Premier, the Hon Jacinta Allan MP, about the impacts of updated flood modelling and associated flood maps on your constituents. As Minister for Water, your correspondence has been forwarded to me for my consideration and response.

I recognise the frustration, anxiety and anger of many residents and property owners whose homes were not previously considered flood prone. For many people, the new flood modelling and mapping information has been very unexpected, and you will rightfully be seeking to understand the implications of this updated information.

The changing nature of risks arising from natural disaster is a complex and challenging issue. Across Australia, and worldwide, we are seeing more severe floods, bushfires, and storms as a result of the changing climate. This is creating uncertainty, cost, and distress for people who live and work in vulnerable areas, and is of increasing importance as our population grows. The changes are indicative of the tough policy decisions which lie ahead for all levels of government – state, local, Commonwealth, and indeed around the world.

Updated flood modelling that reflects changes to risk is an important way for water and emergency management authorities to best understand risk and is an important resource that informs how to mitigate or manage flood risk.

Melbourne Water is now using its updated modelling to undertake a comprehensive assessment of previously identified traditional mitigation solutions, as well as any new innovative solutions for the riverine flood hazards. This work began last year with a preliminary review of past flood mitigation studies for the Maribyrnong River. The potential mitigation options will be analysed to see what is cost effective, affordable, and economically, socially, and culturally acceptable. Community and stakeholders will be invited to participate in the development and assessment of options later this year. More broadly, Melbourne Water is undertaking similar modelling across other parts of its catchment area, and will review modelling again after five years and undertake new modelling every ten years.

Melbourne Water is also initiating work with VICSES and Councils to translate the 2024 flood scenario information into municipal Flood Emergency Management Plans and community Local Flood Guides. This will help to inform flood awareness and preparedness activities for households, communities, and businesses around the state. Given the importance of updated and accurate modelling, water authorities and Councils have also been funded where relevant to ensure that they also have current modelling and information to guide planning decisions and flood mitigation.

I have been clear in my expectations that Melbourne Water will be open and transparent with the community on the next steps. Additionally, I have met with the Insurance Council of Australia to understand further how changing flood risk will impact property owners and policy holders across Victoria.

I want to thank you for taking the time to write as it is critically important for government to understand the needs and expectations of communities.

I appreciate that this response may not have provided you with all the answers or actions that you are seeking now. I am committed to working through this with my local, state and federal colleagues and seeking appropriate outcomes that have lasting benefits for impacted communities like Kensington Banks as we continue to grapple with the challenges of climate change, population growth, and changing flood risk into the future.

I commit to write to you again when appropriate to provide a further update on the work the Victorian Government is doing on this complex matter and have asked my office to provide you with any further updates as they are available.

I understand you have also been provided with briefings by Melbourne Water. My office would be happy to assist in arranging any further briefings for you on request from Melbourne Water or the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action. I welcome a further conversation with myself or my office as to how we can work together to achieve lasting outcomes for residents and property owners.

Thank you once again for writing to the Premier.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Harriet Shing', with a stylized, cursive script.

Hon Harriet Shing MP
Minister for Water

13 / 07 / 2024

CC: Premier Jacinta Allan, Minister Kilkenny, Sheena Watt MP