



Community newsletter - Swan Hill and surrounding areas - Monday 24 October 2022

Floodwaters from the Campaspe and Goulburn Rivers combined with flows down the Murray River have caused major flooding at Echuca. River levels at Echuca Wharf have exceeded the October 1993 flood (94.77 m AHD), and reached 94.92 metres AHD on Monday, 24 October.

As this flood peak extends downstream, major flooding is possible along the Murray River at Swan Hill, which may exceed the minor flood level (4.50 metres) around 27 to 30 October and may reach the major flood level (4.70 metres) during the first week of November (2 to 5 November). This may be similar to the October 1993 flood event, however no two floods are the same.

Emergency services are monitoring Pental Island, Tyntynder, Beverford, Speewa and surrounding areas for flood impacts. The Swan Hill levee is not expected to be overtopped in this event.

Emergency services identified low lying parts of the levee at Tyntynder, which have now been sandbagged 2 to 3 bags high. Additional areas, including at Beverford, will receive further works over the next few days in consultation with local flood wardens.

As weather permits, ground crews and helicopters are being used to observe the flood extent and monitor the condition of levees and roads.

If you decide to leave your home

- Ensure all heating/cooking appliances are turned off. There is a risk of fire if power is restored and there is no one at the property.
- Turn off all switches at the main electrical switchboard, including the Main Switch.
- Unplug your appliances and if you can, lift them up so they remain clear of floodwater.
- Turn your solar system off at the inverter and then turn off at the switchboard. The solar system will have information on shut down procedures.
- Make sure all LPG cylinders are closed (clockwise to close the valve) at the valve on top of the cylinder.
- Leave cylinders where they were installed. Do not move cylinders inside buildings or sheds. A damaged cylinder may leak creating a hazard. Do not disconnect any appliances unless the LPG cylinder is being relocated away from danger.
- LPG cylinders are buoyant and will readily float away in floodwater, creating a hazard

downstream. It is essential that all LPG cylinders be restrained by tying them to a fixed structure using cables or strong ropes.

During a flood

- [VICSES](https://www.vic.gov.au/vic-emergency) has lots of information to help you prepare. Go to www.ses.vic.gov.au
- Download the VicEmergency App and set a watch zone around your property. If you are unable to download the App, visit the VicEmergency website at www.emergency.vic.gov.au



Safety messages

- Do not drive through floodwater. Be aware of road hazards including mud, debris and damaged roads or bridges.
- Floodwater is toxic - never play or swim in floodwater. Wear protective clothing when cleaning up. A small cut can easily get infected and make you very sick.

Council contact details

Phone (03) 5036 2333

<https://www.swanhill.vic.gov.au/>

<https://www.facebook.com/SwanHillCouncil>

Sandbag distribution points

Currently, sandbags are only available for community members in at-risk areas from Tuesday to Friday, 4pm to 8pm each day at:

- Lake Boga CFA
- Beverford CFA
- Ken Harrison Reserve, Swan Hill.

Additional sandbag collection dates will be announced via local media and VicEmergency.

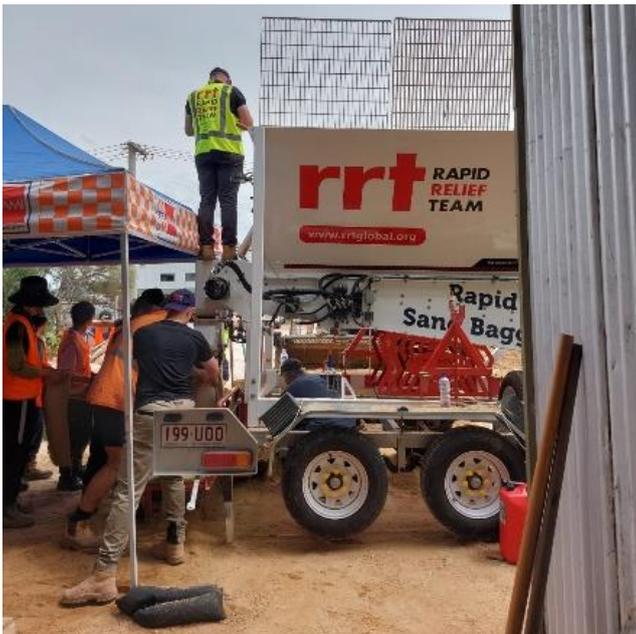
Information for farmers

AgVic is assisting landholders with agricultural relief needs – with a priority on addressing urgent animal welfare issues. Farmers who have been impacted by floods and require assistance, please contact the VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226 or visit the AgVic Website.



Sandbags filled by the thousand

The Rapid Relief Team arrived in Swan Hill on Saturday 22 October, filling over 21,000 sandbags, many of which have been delivered across the region. Volunteers from Adelaide have arrived overnight as well as others from Kyneton and Bendigo arriving today and tomorrow to assist our local teams. Approximately 14,000 additional sandbags were filled on Monday.



Hundreds of community members came together at the Swan Hill SES unit on Sunday 23 October to help fill sandbags using the sandbag filling machine. These sandbags will be used to top up and patch existing levees in local areas.

Thank you to all for the support!



Minor, moderate and major - what does it all mean?

Flood levels for Murray River at Swan Hill:
Minor 4.50 Moderate 4.60 Major 4.70

Minor

- Water spilling over river banks and nearby low lying areas.
- Water coming up through drains in streets.
- Require relocation of stock in some cases.
- Riverside camp areas and some low lying caravan parks impacted.
- Cover low paths, tracks and bridges.
- Some back yards and outbuildings impacted below floor level.

Moderate

- Water spilling over river banks and covering larger areas of land.
- Water around floor level in some rural low-lying houses, sheds and buildings.
- Evacuation may be required in some areas.
- Impact to roads and traffic routes.
- Relocation of stock required in rural areas.

Major

- Widespread flooding, with some buildings inundated above floor level.
- Properties and whole areas may be isolated.
- Major roads and rail routes closed.
- Could require larger-scale evacuation.
- Potential impact to utility services (internet, water, power, sewage).

Red Cross

Red Cross has opened Register.Find.Reunite and is urging people affected by the Victorian Floods to get in touch with their families and friends. Register.Find.Reunite helps find and reunite family, friends and loved ones during a disaster. People can register by phone to 1800 727 077 or via the website.

<https://www.redcross.org.au/communityps/>



Nurse-on-call

Nurse-on-Call on 1300 60 60 24 (this is a phone service that allows you to discuss any health-related issue with a registered nurse, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for the cost of a local call from anywhere in Victoria).



Facts about levees

A flood levee is an embankment usually alongside a river or creek designed to reduce the risk of flooding to properties. They are not designed to protect people. If a levee is in danger of failing, people at risk of being impacted by flooding may be advised to evacuate. It is important that you follow this advice.

Building or increasing the height of a levee can have significant consequences to surrounding areas. To ensure levees don't cause unexpected increases to flood risk, they must be well designed and maintained by experts.

What is **Overtopping**? A levee is in danger of overtopping when the height of the floodwater is higher than the height the levee is designed for. Overtopping is one of the most common reasons for floodwater entering properties behind a levee.

What is **Breaching**? A levee breaches when part

of the levee fails, creating an opening that floodwater can get through. Breaches can be caused by a number of factors and can happen over a long period of time or very suddenly.

If you live near a levee and flooding is predicted you should:

- Listen to evacuation notifications. If a levee is in danger of failing you will be advised to evacuate. Remember that if a levee does fail there may be no time to evacuate. You must leave early.
- Never rely on a levee to protect you. Remember that levees are designed to reduce the risk of damage to property, not protect people, and no levee is flood proof.

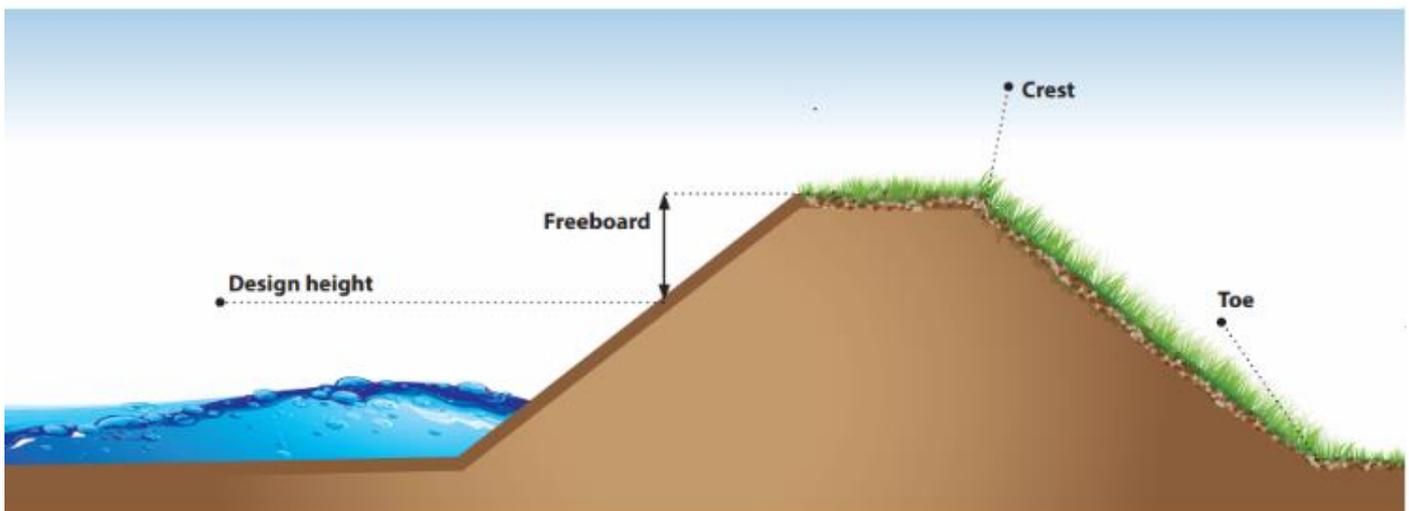
School closures - information on updated school closures is available via the Dept of Education website: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/>

Relief centre - The Stadium, 15 Gray Street, Swan Hill

Levee design

Levees usually contain the following elements:

- **Crest:** the crest is the top of the levee.
- **Design Height:** The height of floodwater that the levee is designed to withstand. This is always lower than the crest height.
- **Freeboard:** the freeboard is the difference between the design height of the levee and the crest. Freeboard is additional height added to the levee to ensure it can withstand a flood that reaches its design height. In the January 2011 flood in Kerang, the flood height exceeded the design height of the levee but fortunately the levee did not overtop due to the freeboard. Freeboard should **never** be relied on to provide protection.
- **Toe:** the toe is the bottom of the levee.
- **Levee Gaps:** Sometimes levees have a built in gap e.g. so that a road can go through when not at risk of flooding. If flooding is expected, gaps need to be filled in by relevant authorities.





Plan and Prepare

- Keep an emergency kit – with enough for 3 days in an emergency.
- Food, water, protective gloves, masks, medications and prescriptions, first aid and personal hygiene items, a waterproof torch, toilet paper, chargers, battery powered radio, batteries, reading glasses, essentials for babies and pets, spare clothing, and comfort items, especially for children and people with a disability.
- Watch what is happening around you and activate your plan.
- Install the Red Cross Get Prepared Smart phone app and follow the steps or complete the Australian Red Cross RediPlan booklet at <https://www.redcross.org.au/prepare>

Take action to reduce impacts at your property

- Take action to reduce impacts at your property
- Keep gutters and drains clear of debris, outdoor furniture, toys etc.
- {Check your building and contents insurance. What type of flooding does it cover?
- Put your most valuable possessions up high, above possible floodwater height.
- Backup important files and documents to a USB kept elsewhere, or to cloud storage.
- Identify higher ground on your property or further away from the danger area.

Health

The recent floods in Victoria pose a risk of increased mosquito breeding. Mosquitos can carry a number of diseases that can make people very ill and, in severe cases, can even cause death. Simple precautions can help protect your community against mosquitoes and the diseases they may carry.

Infectious diseases including gastrointestinal infections and hepatitis A can spread from contact with contaminated floodwater.

Mould poses a risk to health. Mould grows best in damp and poorly ventilated areas, and reproduces by making spores. The risk of mould being present in your home after flooding is high.

Road closures - information on updated road closures is available via 13 11 70 or the VicTraffic website: <https://traffic.vicroads.vic.gov.au/>

Mental health

It is normal to have strong emotional or physical reactions following a distressing event. There is always help available through:

Your local doctor

Local mental health professionals

[Lifeline](https://www.lifeline.org.au/) - 131 114

[Beyond Blue](https://www.beyondblue.org.au/) - 1300 224 636

[MensLine](https://www.mensline.org.au/) - 1300 789 978

[Kid's Help Line](https://www.kidshelpline.org.au/) - 1800 55 1800

[Parent Line](https://www.parentline.org.au/) - 13 22 89

Useful information

Power outages www.powercor.com.au/power-outages-and-faults/live-outage-map/

Telstra has activated disaster assistance packages for customers in the impacted areas. See links for updated information

Telstra Disaster Assistance

<https://www.telstra.com.au/aboutus/community-environment/disaster-reliefTek>

Telstra Exchange

<https://exchange.telstra.com.au/victoria-tasmania-flooding-disaster-assistance-2022/>

Telstra Service Interruptions

<https://outages.telstra.com.au/#/>

Optus

www.optus.com.au/about/network/service-status

Stay informed

www.emergency.vic.gov.au

- Road closures
www.traffic.vicroads.vic.gov.au
- SES www.ses.vic.gov.au
- VicEmergency Hotline – free call 1800 226 226
- VicEmergency app
- Facebook or Twitter (#vicHAZARD)
- Local radio

To access this information in other languages call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 (free call) and ask them to call VicEmergency Hotline. If you are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech/communication impairment contact National Relay Service on 1800 555 677 and ask them to call the VicEmergency Hotline.