

Engagement Summary

Hexham and Woodberry Swamp Catchment Flood Study

Overview

City of Newcastle, in partnership with the NSW Government, Maitland City Council and Cessnock City Council, has engaged a specialist consultant to carry out a flood study for the Hexham and Woodberry Swamp catchments to help us plan for and manage existing and future flood risks.

The Hexham and Woodberry Swamp Catchment Flood Study will improve our understanding of flash flood behaviour, depths, extent and hazards, including the impacts of climate change.

From **24 July** to **21 August 2025**, we asked the community to share their experiences with flooding and knowledge of historical flood events to improve the accuracy and reliability of the flood study.

The study area includes suburbs such as Wallsend, Jesmond, Fletcher, Beresfield, Thornton, Woodberry, Millers Forest and Black Hill.

The community was able to participate by completing the online survey, adding comments to the interactive map or sharing feedback via email.

Communication and promotion



2,637
webpage
visits



175,325
times content
displayed on
social media



38,700
flyers



3,524
reached via
email

A media release was also issued and signage installed at key locations within Newcastle.

We received

157 survey responses

7 comments on the interactive map

6 emails

91 photos and **2** videos

Note: one respondent providing feedback via email referred to locations outside the study area.



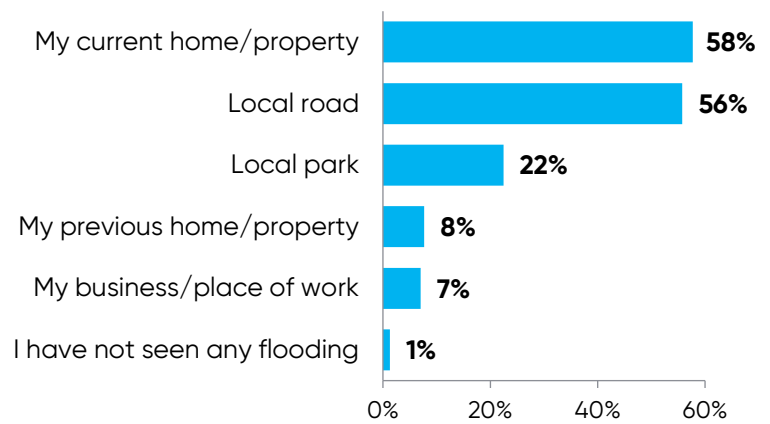
What we heard

Many people had experienced recent flood events in May and July 2025. Other historical events, such as the 2022 and 2007 flooding events, were also commonly mentioned. Several people commented that they are now experiencing more frequent flood events, particularly when there are east coast lows or heavy rain.

The majority of respondents experienced flooding at their current property and on local roads.

Your feedback about flooding ranged from:

Where have you seen flooding occur?



Damaged assets

This includes damage to property, cars, land; physical isolation; health and safety concerns; loss of livestock and income; and increased costs of insurance.



Road closures

This includes traffic congestion, concerns for safety, and the ability to reach important destinations such as home, work, school or essential services. Cancellation of train services due to flooding was also highlighted.



Public facilities and infrastructure

This includes people unable to use parks and sportsgrounds, footpaths/walkways, and animals/wildlife being forced onto higher ground.



Other

This includes concerns about flooding due to an increase in developments and residential run off, with suggestions for natural flood mitigation.

Note: this flood study focuses on flash flooding caused by heavy, intense rainfall.

Several comments and photos depict flooding from the Hunter River which is outside the scope of this flood study, however, may be used to inform future planning and Hunter River flood studies.

You said...

"Whole property was flooded."

"Road flooded, impassable to get to my home."

"Half of back yard flooded from high volume of rain, pooling around underground water mains."

"Rain falls, rushes down from hills, lays in flat areas and can't get out of farm land into Hunter River because it's backed up."

"Flooded my sheds, my pool area. The swamp out the back fills so rapid you don't have time to move anything."

"All of the floods I have mentioned had varying levels with the 2022 event inundating my shed, pool area and isolating the house as an island. The water level was above the first step into the house and there are only three steps. The pool was covered by the flood and water went through the shed."

"Would consider the latest flood as the 2nd highest in my 26 years here."

"Water inundated the roads and caused them to be closed for multiple days after the rain event."

"Most local roads closed, only one way in and one way out of multiple suburbs."

"Everywhere you looked it was like a lake that's normally grass."

"Storm water drainage unable to cope, despite several drainage upgrades in the area."

Community sourced images of flooding



Assisting with flood rescue – Beresfield Golf Course
May 2025



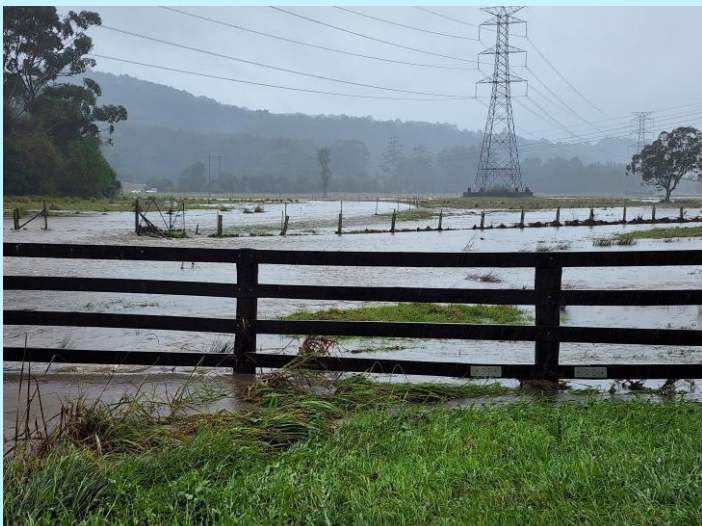
West to Metford roundabout after it had gone
down slightly
May 2025



Front of property – Millers Forest
Date unknown



Maryland Drive during February 2025 weather event
February 2025



Front of property – Stockington
July 2022



Woodberry Drive and Redbill Drive, Woodberry
May 2025



Flooding in reserve near Maryland after severe weather events
July 2025



Photo of cattle during flood
July 2022



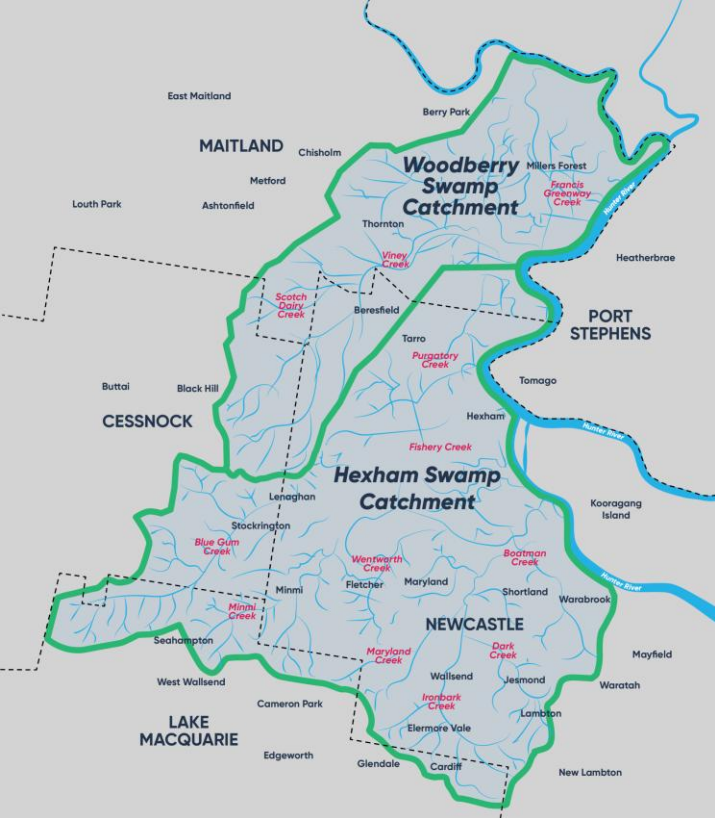
Boundary Road, Wallsend
April 2025



Flooding at Hexham
Date unknown



House at Millers Forest
May 2025



Next steps

Thank you to everyone who shared their experiences with flooding. Your feedback will be used to help us improve the reliability of the flood modelling and calibrate it to the recent May 2025 weather event.

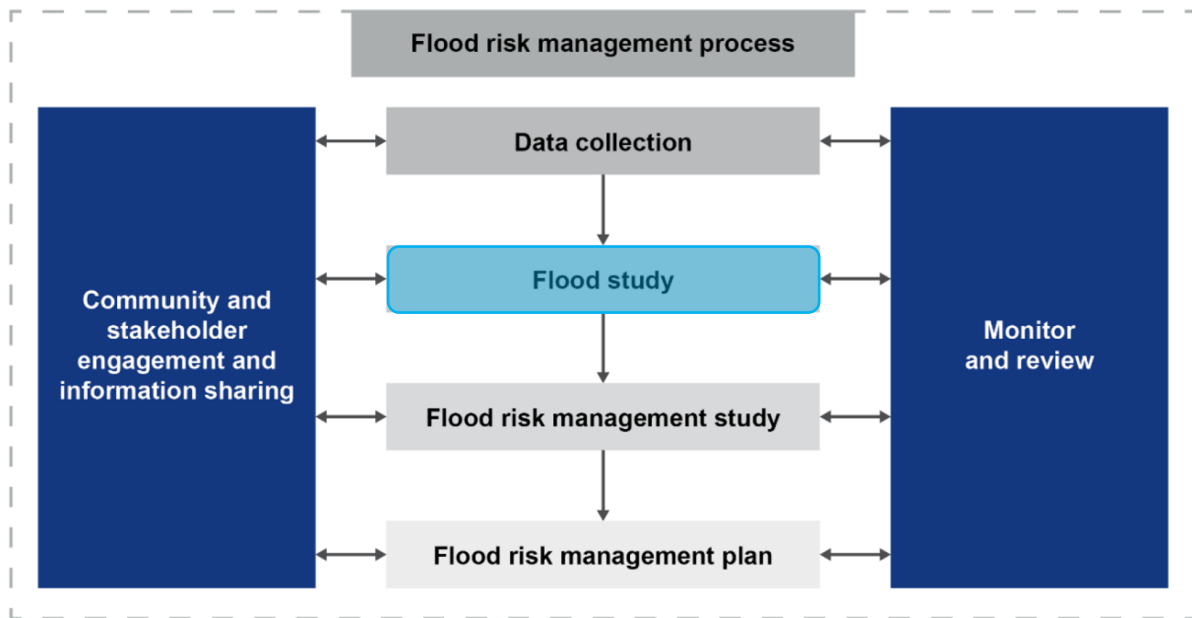
The information is particularly valuable as it covers all three local government areas (Newcastle, Maitland and Cessnock), while data for other historic events, such as June 2007, is heavily concentrated in the vicinity of Wallsend and Jesmond.

The road inundation information will also be useful when we start preparing the Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan, as it relates to potential flood isolation and emergency response.

We will keep the community updated as the project progresses. There will be further opportunities to provide feedback when the draft flood study is placed on public exhibition in 2026.

Engagement with the community and stakeholders takes place throughout the flood risk management process.

We are currently in the flood study phase.



Source: NSW Flood Risk Management Manual – NSW policy on the management of flood liable land.

For further information visit newcastle.nsw.gov.au/yoursay

