Being FloodSafe in Warringah

The Warringah area is known for its beautiful natural bushland, beaches and waterways. Some of these waterways are prone to flooding. Flooding affects people and property and can cause major losses including life, property, possessions and livelihood.

Warringah has experienced large flood events in the past, including April 1998 and March 2003. A series of smaller floods have also taken place. Even these smaller floods threatened people and property.

This brochure has been produced by Warringah Council with assistance from the NSW State Emergency Service (SES) as a guide for residents living near or in flood prone areas. It provides information on flood issues and advice for residents before, during and after flooding.

Flood types

There are two main types of floods that occur in the Warringah area.

1. Flash floods
Usually occur during storms with heavy rainfall when creeks break their banks or the capacity of drainage systems is reached. Often they are sudden and unexpected, with little or no warning. Flash floods can be dangerous with fast flowing floodwater, and can occur in rural and urban areas.

2. Lagoon flooding
When lagoons flood, it can take several days for water levels to subside. It often takes a long time for the water to be released to the sea, because tides and waves can affect the flow rate. This can make flooding last longer and result in disruption to transport over large areas and loss of services and utilities. Lagoon flooding can also be made worse when severe winds create waves on the lagoons.

Lagoon flooding is usually confined to the lagoons and their floodplains. It is important to remember that large floods are inevitable and in many cases, will overwhelm the existing stormwater network and force open lagoons.

Prepare yourself

It is important to prepare your family and property now for the possibility of flooding as floods can occur at any time of the year. Check your insurance policy. Some basic measures you can take right now include keeping a list of emergency numbers near the telephone and assembling an Emergency Kit.

Your Emergency Kit should contain at all times:
- A portable radio with spare batteries
- A torch with spare batteries
- A first aid kit (with supplies relevant for your household or business)
- Candles and waterproof matches
- A waterproof bag for valuables
- Emergency contact numbers

When flooding is likely, place in your Emergency Kit:
- Important papers and photos
- A good supply of required medications
- Any special requirements for babies and the disabled, infirm or elderly
- Strong shoes
- Suitable food and drinks

BUSINESS OWNERS AND MANAGERS
Your business should have a Business FloodSafe Plan. The SES has an interactive 'Business FloodSafe Toolkit' available on the SES website. You can use this toolkit to develop your Business FloodSafe Plan. You should decide where you will move stock and equipment to and how it will be transported. Keep backups of important records and store these in a flood free location. Check your insurance policy. Where possible ensure shop fittings are able to resist water damage. Keep a supply of boxes to move stock and records if flooding is likely. Communicate with your employees what their responsibilities will be in the event of a flood.

Every home and business should put together an Emergency Kit

How the SES can help you

The SES is responsible for responding to floods in NSW. This includes planning for floods and educating people about how to protect themselves and their property.

During floods the SES will provide flood information, safety advice and, where appropriate, conduct evacuation and flood rescue.

www.ses.nsw.gov.au

FOR EMERGENCY HELP IN FLOODS AND STORMS CALL THE SES ON
132 500

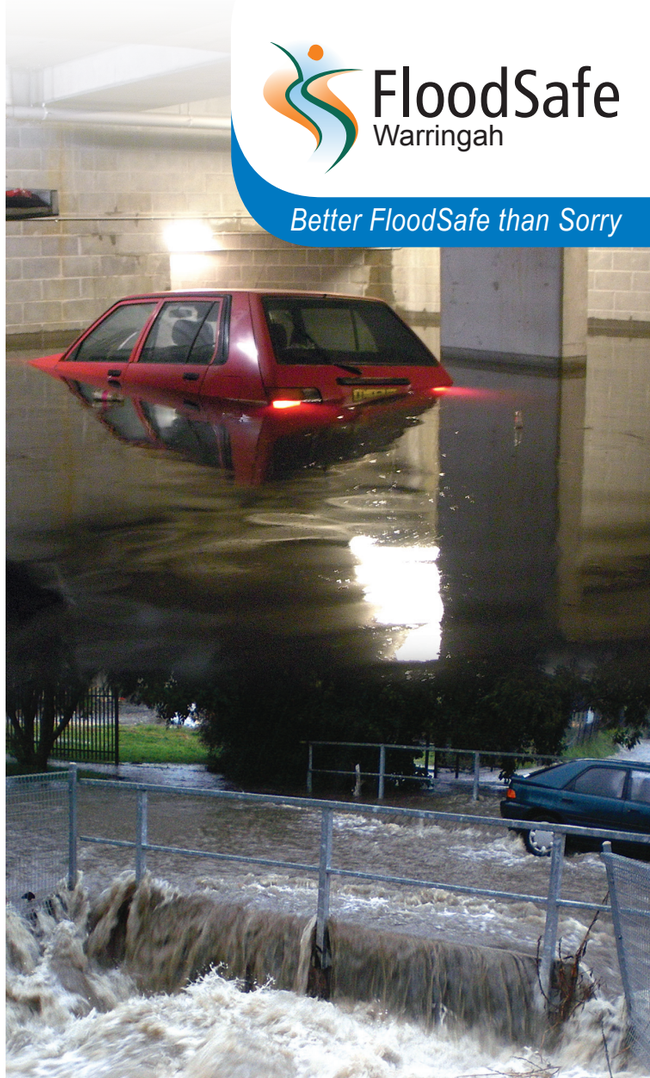
SES website	www.ses.nsw.gov.au
Warringah Council	9942 2111
Warringah Council website	www.warringah.nsw.gov.au
Bureau of Meteorology website	www.bom.gov.au

Warringah Council

SES STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

FloodSafe Warringah

Better FloodSafe than Sorry



Protecting yourself from a flood

SES STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

Picture Top: Narrabeen 2009
Picture Bottom: Newcastle 2007

Warringah

Better FloodSafe than Sorry

Newcastle 2007

Bankstown 1988

Bankstown 1988

Heads up on flooding

You should be alert, keep an eye on the weather and keep listening to a local radio station for further information, updates and advice.

For many of the urban areas in Warringah, very heavy rainfall lasting a couple of hours can be sufficient to produce significant flash flooding. These are often the result of severe thunderstorms or stationary weather systems.

The following actions are encouraged.

RESIDENCES

- Locate and check your Home Emergency Kit
- Locate important papers, valuables and mementoes and put them in your Home Emergency Kit
- Check if neighbours are aware of possible flooding
- Locate and prepare pets for possible evacuation
- Stack possessions, records, stock or equipment on benches and tables, placing electrical items on top
- Secure objects that are likely to float and cause damage
- Relocate waste containers, chemicals and poisons well above floor level

BUSINESS OWNERS AND MANAGERS

- Locate and activate your Business FloodSafe Plan
- Ensure neighbouring businesses are aware of the Weather Warnings
- Where possible back up records and store in a flood free location
- Keep in contact with neighbouring businesses
- Ensure employees are able to get home before evacuation routes are closed

Newcastle 2007

How you will be advised of a coming flood

Severe Weather Warnings, Severe Thunderstorm Warnings and Flood Watches are issued by the Bureau of Meteorology and will be broadcast over radio stations such as:

702 ABC Sydney	AM 702

These warnings will also be available on the Bureau of Meteorology's website www.bom.gov.au

During a flood

- NEVER drive, ride or walk through floodwater - this is the main cause of major injuries or fatalities during floods as water may be deeper or faster flowing than people think and may contain hidden snags and debris. As little as 20 centimetres of fast flowing floodwater can knock you off your feet
- You should never enter floodwater, but if floodwaters rise around your car, get out and move to higher ground immediately. Cars can easily be swept away in moving water
- DO NOT attempt to cross floodwaters to reach your house if you are returning home – seek safe refuge at a neighbour's house. The duration of a flash flood is likely to be less than 2 hours, so stay put
- Keep listening to a local radio station for further information, updates and advice
- Keep in contact with your neighbours
- Be prepared to evacuate but only do so if advised by local authorities and/or emergency services
- If you are trapped by flood waters stay inside your home or business until advised otherwise by local authorities and/or emergency services

Preparing to evacuate

- Take your Home Emergency Kit with you
- Turn off the electricity and water as you leave and turn off and secure gas bottles
- Local authorities and/or emergency services will advise you of which evacuation points or evacuation centre to go to
- DO NOT leave your pets behind. Put them on leads or in pet containers and take them with you

When you evacuate

You must leave well before roads to high ground are closed by floodwater. Seek shelter with family or friends. In major floods an evacuation centre may be established by the Department of Community Services (DoCS). Information will be available from DoCS State Disaster Recovery Centre on 1800 018 444.

Assistance for animals

The NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) provides assistance for livestock, companion animals and wildlife during floods. This may include coordinating the rescue and housing of companion animals. If directed to evacuate, you should take your pets with you. Please search the DPI website for further information, it has an online brochure about the management of pets – www.dpi.nsw.gov.au

After a flood - returning to your home or business

- Check the stability of your property before entering (this needs to be completed by qualified people)
- Ensure that the power lines are not down before you re-enter your property
- Check safety of electrical equipment (this needs to be completed by qualified people)
- Identify slip and trip hazards
- Wear enclosed non-slip shoes, protective clothing and strong gloves when cleaning up after a flood
- Be aware of spiders and snakes
- If you do not need help, check on your neighbours

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