

UPPER PARRAMATTA RIVER
CATCHMENT TRUST

Facts About Flooding

in the Upper Parramatta River Catchment



Living in a floodplain means understanding and managing the risks of floods.

We need to be aware of the risks and plan ahead to minimise the harm from floods.

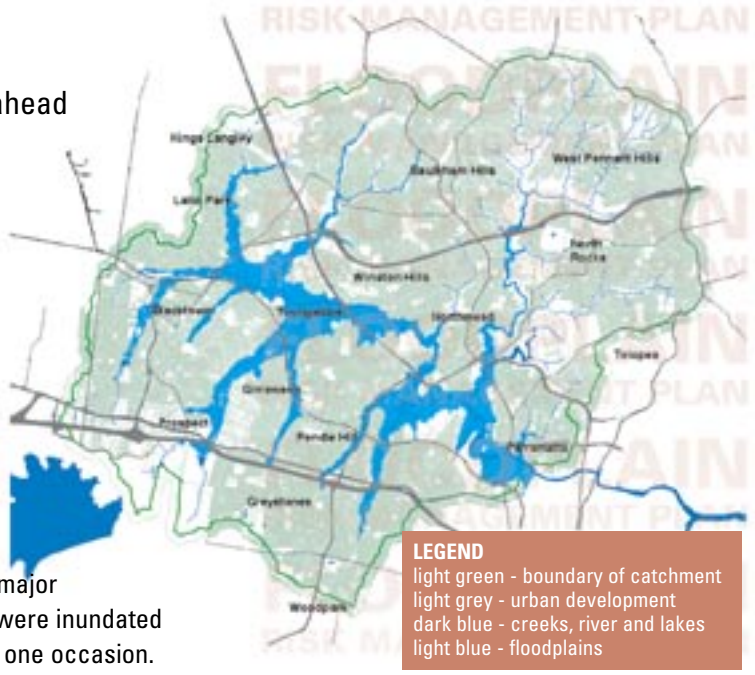
Why do we need to worry about floods?

The Upper Parramatta River, Toongabbie Creek, Darling Mills Creek and the many other creeks in the catchment map shown above, provide wonderful environmental corridors for the people of Baulkham Hills, Blacktown, Holroyd and Parramatta. But occasionally flooding does occur.

Nobody likes to think that floods might affect them. Being flooded may be difficult to imagine if you have not experienced the damage, inconvenience and heartache that flooding can cause.

In late 1980s, the catchment experienced a series of storms and major floods, and many properties that had never been flooded before were inundated above floor level on more than one occasion.

Upper Parramatta River Catchment - Floodplains



LEGEND
 light green - boundary of catchment
 light grey - urban development
 dark blue - creeks, river and lakes
 light blue - floodplains

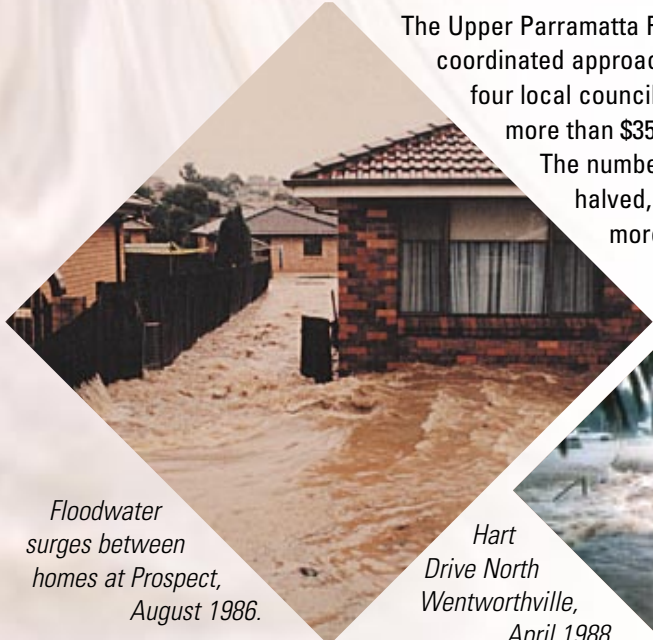
The Upper Parramatta River Catchment Trust was established in 1989 and provides a coordinated approach to flood mitigation in the catchment. Since 1989, the Trust and the four local councils of Baulkham Hills, Blacktown, Holroyd and Parramatta have spent more than \$35 million on flood mitigation works and services.

The number of houses flooded above floor level in a 100 year flood has been halved, while the number of flood-affected businesses has been reduced by more than two-thirds.

Despite this progress, there are still 350 houses and 100 businesses that would be flooded above floor level in a 100 year flood. Nearly 1,600 properties would experience some flooding of their property in a 100 year flood.

What is a '100 year flood'?

A '100 year flood' means that in any one year there is a '1 in 100' or 1% chance that a flood of this size, or larger, will occur. Over many centuries, a '100 year flood' will occur on average once every 100 years. A '100 year flood' is also known as a '1 in 100 year flood' or a '1% flood'.



Floodwater surges between homes at Prospect, August 1986.

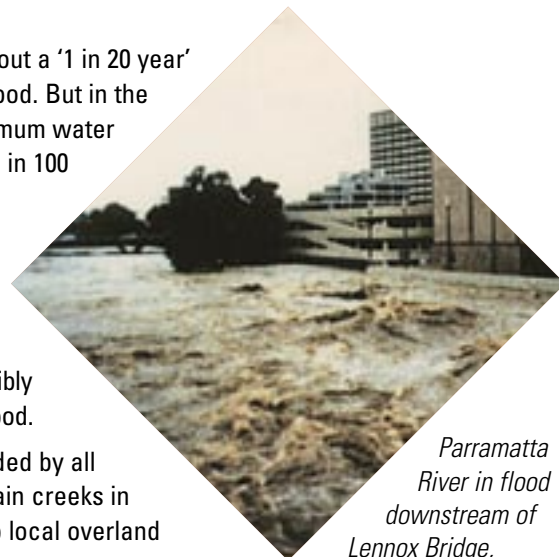
Hart Drive North Wentworthville, April 1988.

At Parramatta, the major storm of August 1986 in the Upper Parramatta River was about a '1 in 20 year' flood. The major storm in April 1988 was even larger, but only about a '1 in 60 year' flood. But in the middle of the catchment, where most homes and businesses were flooded, the maximum water levels were very similar. There has not been a flood in the catchment as large as a '1 in 100 year' flood for more than 100 years.

What is a 'probable maximum flood'?

Floods bigger than a '1 in 100 year' flood can occur. Floods bigger than a 100 year flood have recently devastated the towns of Nyngan (1990), Coffs Harbour (1996) and Katherine (1998). The 'probable maximum flood' is the largest flood that could possibly occur. It is now important to consider the risks of flooding up to this the largest possible flood.

The terms 'flood-prone land' or the 'floodplain' now cover all land that would be flooded by all floods up to the probable maximum flood. The areas of flood-prone land along the main creeks in the Upper Parramatta River catchment are shown on the map above. Land subject to local overland flooding is also considered 'flood-prone'.



Parramatta River in flood downstream of Lennox Bridge, April 1988.

Does flooding affect the way I want to improve or develop my property?

The Upper Parramatta River Catchment Trust and its four local councils have prepared a catchment-wide Floodplain Risk Management Plan. Part of this Plan has been to adopt a set of flood-related building and development controls that are consistent across the catchment, with only slight variations between the four Councils.

Flood-related building and development controls have been successful in reducing the flood risks in the catchment for many years now. Most of the controls will not change due to this new Plan.

The development controls in the new Plan also concentrate on the safety of people and their belongings. As well as controls on floor levels — the use of flood-compatible building materials, the need for structural integrity of buildings and evacuation to above floodwaters, all need to be considered when improving or developing residential and business properties.

The new Plan also continues to make sure that development in one part of the catchment does not make flooding worse for anyone else in the catchment. The current 'On-site Stormwater Detention' Policy, which does not change with the new Plan, is already going a long way towards achieving this goal.

What is a 'Flood Risk Precinct'?

As part of the new Floodplain Risk Management Plan, the floodplains of the catchment have been divided into 3 different areas of similar flood risk — high risk, medium risk and low risk. These are known as 'Flood Risk Precincts'. Depending on which 'Flood Risk Precinct' your property is in; different flood-related building and development controls will apply.

HIGH FLOOD RISK PRECINCT = "RED" areas

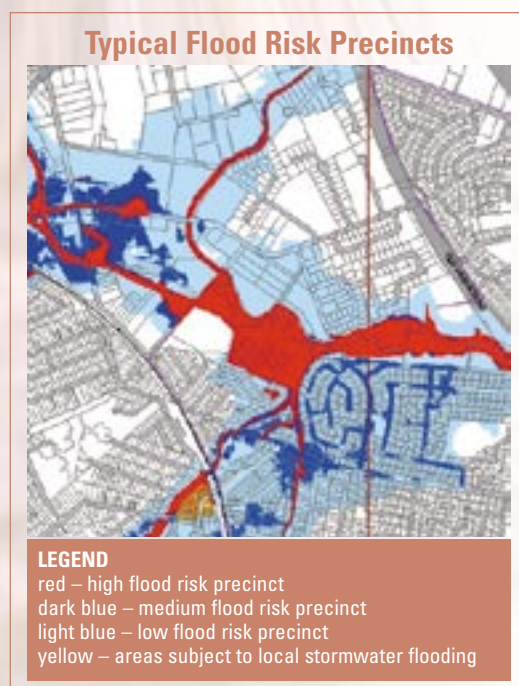
This precinct covers land flooded in a 100 year flood where floodwaters are deeper than about 800mm and fast flowing. There would be a danger to people's safety, and wading through floodwaters and evacuation would be difficult. Most of this precinct is within the creeks and detention basins or in areas close to the creek corridor.

MEDIUM FLOOD RISK PRECINCT = "DARK BLUE" areas

This precinct covers all the rest of the land flooded in a 100 year flood that is not in the High Flood Risk Precinct.

LOW FLOOD RISK PRECINCT = "LIGHT BLUE" areas

Land in this precinct is above the level of the 100 year flood, but would be flooded in a probable maximum flood. These areas of the catchment are now recognised as being at risk (although a very small risk) of flooding. Most land uses would still be permitted in this precinct with very few development controls. Properties in this precinct would be included in flood awareness programs, evacuation plans and emergency planning to make sure that we have a community well-prepared for the next big flood.



How can I find out if my property is flood affected?

The locations and extent of the three flood risk precincts have been determined by the Upper Parramatta River Catchment Trust. Flood information on individual properties can be obtained from your local council's Enquiry Counter or via links from the Trust's website at: www.uprct.nsw.gov.au or Contact the Floodplain or Stormwater Manager at your local Council: Baulkham Hills Shire Council; Blacktown City Council; Holroyd City Council; Parramatta City Council.