

# Lower Shoalhaven Levee Workshop

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Who is responsible for the Terara levee?

The levee is owned by the Shoalhaven City Council. The Council is responsible for the care and maintenance of the levee.

### What is the current condition of the Terara levee?

The current condition of the levee based on the latest audit conducted in 2015 is fair. A number of defects have been identified in the Terara levee and are currently being rectified under the Shoalhaven River Levee Restoration Project 2017/18 funded by Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements and Shoalhaven City Council.

### What protection does the Terara levee provide the community?

The main purpose of the Terara levee is to provide protection from higher velocity floodwaters inundating the village first, hence this is considered a deflective levee. However, relatively slow rising floodwaters will inundate the village prior to levee overtopping. The majority of the village will be inundated by backwater flooding from the floodplain by 4.7m AHD on the Terara Gauge, however, evacuation will be required before this height is reached. During large floods floodwater can be deep and fast flowing.

### What is the trigger and procedure for opening the entrance at Shoalhaven Heads?

Immediately after a Flood Warning is received predicting a flood level of 2.5 m AHD or greater at Nowra Bridge, machinery will be deployed to Shoalhaven Heads and excavation will commence, working from inland towards the Pacific Ocean. If at any stage the water level at Shoalhaven Heads is rapidly approaching 2m AHD, opening of the entrance will commence immediately. This being due to Broughton Creek or local drainage contributing to the flow. The process is aborted if subsequent forecasts are revised to be confident that a level of 3.0 m AHD is not anticipated to be reached and/or sustained at Nowra Bridge. Again, this depends on the water level at Shoalhaven Heads due to Broughton Creek or local drainage contributing to the flow.

### Where are other levees in the lower Shoalhaven located?

Council owns over 23km of the levee in the Lower Shoalhaven River Floodplain. Like the Terara levee, the objective is to provide residents time to safely evacuate to higher ground in a flood event and reduce the likelihood of further flood damage due to prolonged inundation of agricultural land in the floodplain.

### What were the heights of the most recent flood events?

Date	Terara Gauge (m)	Nowra Gauge (m)
June 2016	3.08	3.24
August 2015	3.54	3.97
June 2013	3.25	3.73
March 1978	3.7	5.29

### What is the role of the SES during floods?

The SES is the combat agency for flooding in NSW. During floods the SES will provide flood information, safety advice and can arrange for the delivery of essential supplies to communities isolated by floodwater. Where possible, the SES will conduct evacuations and undertake flood rescues.

### Is there a flood warning system?

If heavy rain is forecast that may result in flooding, the Bureau of Meteorology may issue a Flood Watch. A Flood Watch means there is a developing weather pattern that may cause flooding in the next day or two. When flooding is about to happen the Bureau of Meteorology will issue flood warnings for river gauges located at Nowra and Terara. A minimum of 6 to 9 hours warning time will be available for significant river rises at Nowra.

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## How are warnings communicated to the community?

The SES issues flood warnings to the community. These are communicated via local radio stations, doorknocking of homes and businesses, the internet, social media and Emergency Alert.

Emergency Alert is a telephone based warning system that provides voice messages to landline telephones or text messages to mobile telephones. When you hear a warning pay attention and follow emergency instructions.

## Where can I find out information about whether my property can flood?

Shoalhaven City Council has undertaken studies to identify flood-prone areas. Outputs including flood maps can be found on the Shoalhaven City Council website ([www.shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au](http://www.shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au)).

## How can we contact SES for assistance during a flood?

For SES emergency assistance during floods and storms, call 132 500. If an emergency is life-threatening, call 000.

## Where should I evacuate to?

In the event of a flood, an evacuation centre may be established. The location of this centre will be advised in flood warnings. Alternatively, you could stay with friends or family.

## What should go into a home emergency plan?

The SES maintains a webpage to assist people to complete a home emergency plan ([www.seshomeemergencyplan.com.au](http://www.seshomeemergencyplan.com.au))

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## What can I do to prepare for flooding in advance?

There are many things you can do to be prepared for flooding. Some of these include:

- Find out more about your local flood risk and history
- Know the heights at which your property could be affected by flooding
- Check your insurance policy to ensure your property is covered for flood damage
- Know the safest way to go when you decide to evacuate
- When flooding is likely, listen to local radio
- Prepare an emergency kit consisting of a battery powered radio, torch, spare batteries, copies of important documents, first aid kit, safe drinking water and long-life food.

## What should I do during a flood?

When flooding is forecast or has begun:

- Never drive, ride, swim or walk through floodwater
- Never let children play or swim in floodwater
- Listen to local radio
- Keep in contact with your neighbours
- Stack possessions on benches and tables with electrical goods in the highest locations
- Anchor objects that are likely to float and cause damage
- Put important papers, valuables, photos and other special items into your emergency kit
- Move rubbish bins, chemicals and poisons to the highest place.

