



# DO YOU LIVE BEHIND A LEVEE?

## FACILITATOR GUIDE



## Acknowledgements

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# FACILITATOR INTRODUCTION



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ABOUT LEVEES

Communities should be regularly engaged about their flood threat including the nature and integrity of flood levees that they live behind. Community engagement can take numerous forms but ideally should allow for community participation through two-way dialogue between the SES and communities.

One method of promoting two-way dialogue is through undertaking a workshop with at-risk residents and business operators. This guide has been developed based on the experience of conducting community workshops to engage with NSW communities about the levees.

Research has shown the importance of continued community engagement with communities protected by levees. Often such communities can develop a false sense of security, believing that a levee provides a higher level of protection than it actually does. Recent research before the Lismore 2018 flood showed that after the flood levee protecting the Central Business District was built in 2005, businesses reduced their levels of flood preparedness. Similar anecdotes are told about other levee protected communities across NSW.

The purpose of this guide is to assist facilitators in organising and conducting future workshops about levees. It consists of three key sections: 1) key messages, 2) how to organise a community levee workshop and 3) how to facilitate a community levee workshop. Workshops are suitable to provide basic awareness about levees to community members and SES volunteers.

## COMMUNITY LEEVE WORKSHOP PURPOSE

The purpose of undertaking a community levee workshop is to engage with communities to provide information about levees in their community, the nature of the flood threat and on how to prepare. It is also an opportunity for the SES, councils and other agencies to hear the views of community regarding likely behaviour, flood planning and to answer any questions the community may have.

Key outcomes sought for the community include:

- Enhanced awareness of local flood risk.
- Enhanced awareness of local flood levees and their operation.
- Enhanced awareness of the limitations of flood levees.
- Enhanced knowledge of flood preparedness and response actions.
- Enhanced knowledge of local flood plans.

Key outcomes sought for the SES include:

- Improved knowledge of the community's views and likely behaviours during floods.
- Improved understanding of community networks and vulnerable people.



# HOW TO ORGANISE A COMMUNITY WORKSHOP ABOUT LEVEES



## SUMMARY OF FLOOD PREPAREDNESS MESSAGES



### Important facts about levees

There is a strong and widespread public and in some cases even local government perception that levees remove the flood risk to life and property. This is certainly not the case. It is helpful to keep the following statements in mind when talking to communities about levees.

- Levees are generally designed to control a certain amount of floodwater. If larger floods occur floodwater will flow over the levee.
- Levees reduce the risk of flooding. But no levee can eliminate all flood risk.
- Dangerous flooding can result behind a levee when it is over topped or breached.
- Levees can fail through means other than over topping including erosion or seepage through the levee.
- Levee systems are not designed to provide protection for people, they are designed to reduce the frequency of which houses and businesses are flooded.



### What if a levee is likely to overtop or be breached?

- The SES has developed and maintains a flood plan for your local area in case a flood threatens to overtop or breach the levee.
- In the event that a flood threatens to overtop or breach a levee, the SES will issue evacuation warnings to at-risk residents and business operators.



### How can I prepare now?

- You can undertake some simple steps to be better prepared including:

- Knowing about your flood risk
- Checking your insurance
- Preparing an emergency plan or kit



### Where will flood warnings be available from?

- Flood warnings are issued during floods to provide notice of when floods may occur and their magnitude. Flood predictions are made by the Bureau of Meteorology.
- Warning are available from:
  - Local radio stations
  - SES website
  - Bureau of Meteorology website
  - Social media



### What should I do if I need to evacuate?

- Act early as roads may close
- Raise valuables as high as possible
- Take clothing, medications and pets with you
- Tell people where you are going and look out for others that might be in need
- Don't return until it is safe



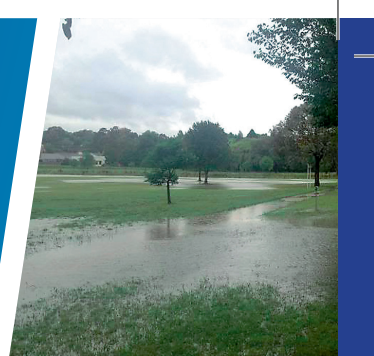
### Are there any resources that could help?

- The SES has many resources on its website to assist people be better prepared for floods. These include emergency planning toolkits available at:

[www.seshomeemergencyplan.com.au](http://www.seshomeemergencyplan.com.au)

[www.sesemergencyplan.com.au/business](http://www.sesemergencyplan.com.au/business)

# HOW TO ORGANISE A COMMUNITY WORKSHOP ABOUT LEVEES



ITEM	RESOURCES & ORGANISATION
<p><b>Resources &amp; Organisation</b></p> 	<p><b>Follow these instructions to organise a community levee workshop.</b></p> <p><b>Resources required include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Room at hall or club with chairs and seats</li> <li>• Understanding levees guide</li> <li>• Local flood, catchment and levee location maps</li> <li>• Relevant local flood photos</li> <li>• Case studies of previous levee overtopping or breaches</li> <li>• White board</li> <li>• Butchers paper</li> <li>• White board markers and pens</li> <li>• Evaluation forms</li> <li>• Audio visual aids such as laptop and projector</li> <li>• Pin board</li> <li>• Microphone</li> <li>• A1 size street maps</li> </ul> <p>If there is to be catering, ensure that it is arranged, and timing of meals to be served is clear.</p> <p>Ensure that a technical representative from the local council is present to provide a presentation on the nature of the levee. If not, get input from the local council before undertaking presentations.</p> <p>Invitations should be extended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community members</li> <li>• Local business chamber</li> <li>• Local council staff and employees</li> <li>• Other local emergency services: for example, Police, NSW Fire and Rescue, Ambulance NSW, Volunteer Rescue Association and Rural Fire Service</li> <li>• Infrastructure operators: for example, energy</li> <li>• Office of Environment and Heritage</li> <li>• Others deemed relevant.</li> </ul>



# HOW TO ORGANISE A COMMUNITY WORKSHOP ABOUT LEVEES



## ITEM

## RESOURCES & ORGANISATION

### Resources & Organisation



The workshop can be promoted via the media, community groups and social media. An invitation can be constructed for use on social media utilising local flood photos. See **Figure 1** below for an example.



**Figure 1: Example of invitation**

Establish a process for registering RSVPs and ensure liaison occurs with the venue to ensure facilities will be adequate.

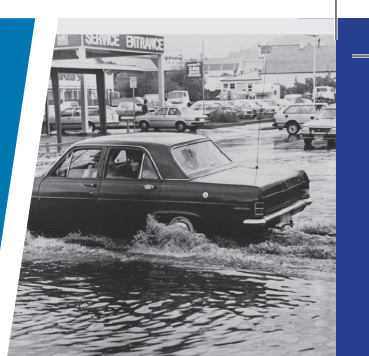
Consider developing a tailored short guide summarising key messages for the community or utilise the generic levee factsheet.

Read through the understanding levees guide and familiarise yourself with the local flood plan and flood intelligence cards prior to facilitating the workshop.

Prior to the workshop, arrange a meeting with all presenters and conduct a run through of the agenda.

Get to the venue an hour before to set-up and resolve any last-minute issues.

# HOW TO FACILITATE A COMMUNITY WORKSHOP ABOUT LEVEES



## ITEM

## ROOM PREPARATION

### Room Preparation



Set the room up so that people will be seated in groups (café style). Aim for the environment to be friendly and relaxed and avoid an 'us and them' atmosphere. For an example see **Figure 2** below.



**Figure 2: Room configuration**

Establish a reflections board with post-it notes or a white board where people at any stage can record a thought or a question.

Establish knowledge walls for community participants to read and view information. Information to be displayed should include:




- Flood mapping and key gauge heights
- Local flood photos
- Maps of the catchment area
- Maps that show where levees are located
- Case studies of previous levee overtopping or breaches

See **Figure 3** (page 9) for an example:





# HOW TO FACILITATE A COMMUNITY WORKSHOP ABOUT LEVEES



ITEM	ROOM PREPARATION
<p><b>Room Preparation</b></p> 	 <p><b>Figure 3: Example of a knowledge wall</b></p> <p>Provide participants with any other materials, brochures etc. Have butchers paper and pens on each table.</p>
<p><b>During and After the Workshop</b></p> 	<p><b>Record</b> any points made during the workshop to produce any follow-on materials such as frequently asked questions or planning documents.</p> <p><b>FAQs</b></p> <p>An example of such a FAQ can be found on Brand Online under the Do You Live Behind a Levee? section</p>

# HOW TO FACILITATE A COMMUNITY WORKSHOP ABOUT LEVEES







ITEM	NOTES: OPENING	TIMING
<p>Opening</p> 	<p><b>Follow these notes when facilitating the workshop. They may be altered to suit local circumstances.</b></p> <p><b>Welcome to the workshop today.</b></p> <p><b>My name is [xxxx] from [xxxxx] I am the facilitator for today's workshop.</b></p> <p>[Other key people to be introduced.]</p> <p>The purpose of today's workshop is to share information about flooding in [xxxx community] and the town's levee/s and discuss options for emergency response in the event that the levee/s may be at-risk of overtopping or breaching.</p> <p>There are already well-developed emergency plans for [xxxxx] that we would like to help you know more about. We would also like to hear how you plan to respond to flooding.</p> <p>The outcomes of the workshop will assist residents and businesses to review their flood plans and with your feedback, SES can scope further engagement activities.</p> <p>The SES acknowledges that emergency management is a shared partnership between emergency service organisations and the community, with both having a shared responsibility. Hence this workshop is vital in exchanging information and perspectives.</p> <p>[Outline the agenda for the workshop to the group.]</p> <p>There are some workshop rules to ensure everyone gets to hear the valuable information that is being shared today and has an opportunity to contribute.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone's opinions are valuable: please give everyone an opportunity to have their say to express their opinions and concerns. There may be some conflicting opinions on occasions between participants: please respect these and agree to disagree.</li> <li>• Feel free to ask questions throughout – there is no such thing as a silly question.</li> <li>• Any problems or issues please feel free to raise them directly with me.</li> </ul>	 <p><b>10 minutes</b></p>



# HOW TO FACILITATE A COMMUNITY WORKSHOP ABOUT LEVEES







ITEM	NOTES: DISCUSSION EXERCISE	TIMING
<b>Discussion Exercise</b> 	<p><b>Groups to be formed with associated workshop materials.</b></p> <p>Provide each group with street maps of the town / suburb and ask them to draw areas that are at risk of flooding and any aspects of flood behaviour.</p> <p>Once complete, ask each group to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the community's experience with flooding?</li> <li>• What are the community's main concerns regarding flooding?</li> </ul> <p>Summarise the key themes listed and present these to the group. Provide groups an opportunity to provide further comments.</p>	 <b>20 minutes</b>

ITEM	NOTES: PRESENTATION ON THE LEVEE	TIMING
<b>Presentation on the Levee</b> 	<p>A presentation to be provided by [the levee operator] on how the levee works, its level of protection and impacts on the community if levee breaching or overtopping was to occur.</p> <p>Presentation to cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where are the levees?</li> <li>• What is their purpose?</li> <li>• How are they operated?</li> <li>• What are the risks associated with levees failing or overtopping?</li> <li>• What areas would be inundated if any of the levees failed or overtopped?</li> <li>• Any backwater flooding issues</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> the SES Levee Community Workshop Slides may assist</p> <p>Alternatively, the SES representative may provide a presentation utilising the SES Levee Community Workshop Slides.</p>	 <b>20 minutes</b>

# HOW TO FACILITATE A COMMUNITY WORKSHOP ABOUT LEVEES





ITEM	NOTES: Q&A SESSION	TIMING
<b>Q&amp;A Session</b> 	<p>SES, Council, Police and other relevant representatives to form a panel and answer questions about the levee and possible impacts. The facilitator will facilitate the discussion and ask any additional questions.</p> <p>Possible questions to prompt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the current condition of the levee/s?</li> <li>• When would the levee/s overtop?</li> <li>• How will residents be warned if a flood was to threaten?</li> <li>• How much warning time would residents have?</li> <li>• How does Council monitor the levee/s during a flood?</li> <li>• What would happen if the levee/s breached rather than overtopped?</li> <li>• Have levee/s settled since construction?</li> </ul> <p>Facilitator to guide participants through materials contained on the knowledge wall and encourage them to view materials.</p>	 <b>25 minutes</b>







ITEM	NOTES: PLANNING EXERCISE	TIMING
<b>Planning Exercise</b> 	<p>Within the same groups already formed, community members to be encouraged to participate in a flood scenario exercise to help inform local planning and understand community behaviour. Given the information presented so far during the workshop lets discuss a scenario together. If a flood was predicted to overtop the levee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) What actions would you expect to be undertaken by emergency services?</li> <li>2) What actions would you as community members likely undertake?</li> <li>3) What information would you need to help your decision making?</li> <li>4) Where are the most vulnerable people in the community? How can they be engaged with?</li> <li>5) How can community members be assisting each other during a flood event?</li> <li>6) What key community groups or networks could be involved in planning and responding to floods?</li> </ol>	 <b>30 minutes</b>



# HOW TO FACILITATE A COMMUNITY WORKSHOP ABOUT LEVEES



ITEM	NOTES: PLANNING EXERCISE	TIMING
<b>Planning Exercise</b> 	<p>5) How can community members be assisting each other during a flood event?</p> <p>6) What key community groups or networks could be involved in planning and responding to floods?</p> <p>A nominated scribe to make notes on butcher's paper.</p> <p>Provide time between each question for community representatives to complete.</p> <p>At conclusion each group to display their notes around the room for other groups to view.</p> <p>Facilitator to summarise key themes and allow for any questions.</p>	 <b>30 minutes</b>

ITEM	SUMMARY/EVALUATION/CLOSE	TIMING
<b>Summary</b> 	<p>The facilitator will summarise the workshop outcomes and facilitate any final discussion.</p> <p>Information to be collected to assist in populating the community emergency plan.</p>	 <b>5 minutes</b>
<b>Evaluation</b> 	<p>Participants to be provided with an evaluation form with some questions about their understanding of the levee and likely actions in the event of levee failure or overtopping.</p>	 <b>5 minutes</b>
<b>Close</b> 	<p>Facilitator to summarise outcomes and any next steps</p> <p>Consider if any issues need to be followed up</p>	 <b>5 minutes</b>

# FURTHER MATERIALS

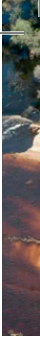


## FURTHER MATERIALS

In preparation for the workshop the following complementary resources will be of help. You will also need to access the following materials. These materials are available on NSW SES Brandonline.

- [Understanding Levees PowerPoint presentations for SES volunteers](#)
- [So You live Behind a Levee PowerPoint presentation for Communities](#)
- [Understanding Levees Guide](#)
- [Case Studies on Levees Overtopping](#)
- [Do You Live Behind a Levee Information Flyer](#)
- [Levee Myths and Facts Sheet](#)
- A range of graphically designed [images](#) that can be used both for educational purpose but also as social media resources for messaging. The images show levee design, overtopping and breaching and it's time to move to safety
- [So you live behind a levee video](#). This video explains in plain English what a levee does and will help communities who live behind a levee make safer decisions during times of flooding." You can watch the video here <https://youtu.be/hQRk8be0yak> or download on [www.sesbrandonline.com.au/levees/training-materials](http://www.sesbrandonline.com.au/levees/training-materials).
- [Levee workshop evaluation form](#)

All these resources are available on: [www.sesbrandonline.com.au](http://www.sesbrandonline.com.au)



## Notes

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal dotted lines.





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