

# Frequently Asked Questions – Fairfield Stage 2 Planning Proposal Finalization

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This document answers frequently asked questions

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## **When will the remaining land of Fairfield Stage 2 Planning Proposal be rezoned?**

Further work is required to address the flood evacuation risks before land impacted by the Probable Maximum Flood (PMF) can be rezoned.

The Department will continue to work with Fairfield City Council and the NSW Reconstruction Authority (RA) on the next steps in progressing any further rezonings in the flood affected areas of the Fairfield Local Government Area (LGA), including the preparation of evacuation modelling.

The Department is also working with the RA and other state agencies to map out the next steps for disaster adaptation planning and implications for strategic planning within the Georges River catchment, as recommended by the NSW Flood Inquiry 2022.

## **What is the PMF?**

This is the Probable Maximum Flood (PMF). The largest flood that could conceivably be expected to occur at a particular location, usually estimated from probable maximum precipitation. The PMF defines the maximum extent of flood prone land, that is, the floodplain. It is difficult to define a meaningful Annual Exceedance Probability for the PMF, but it is commonly assumed to be of the order of 10<sup>-4</sup> to 10<sup>-7</sup> (once in 10,000 to 10,000,000 years) (10).

## **Why did it take so long for the planning proposal to be finalised?**

There have been delays in the finalisation process as a result of the complexity of the flood issues and understanding impacts for development.

The Department referred this planning proposal to the Flood Advisory Panel on 12 January 2023 seeking the Panel's recommendations on how to proceed taking into consideration flood and evacuation matters. The Panel issued its advice on 22 June 2023.

The Department also provided the advice of the Panel to Fairfield City Council and gave Council adequate time to respond and complete their own investigations. Importantly, Council requested that the Department consider their independent review of the Panel advice and their recently adopted Cabravale Overland Flood Study before finalizing the assessment of the planning proposal. Council provided this information in late 2023.

## **What does this mean for future planning proposals in the Fairfield LGA?**

The Department will continue to assess any new planning proposals submitted by Fairfield City Council for a Gateway determination, on their merit. Strategic and site-

specific merit are the key considerations for whether a planning proposal should proceed. For land subject to the PMF in this high risk, George River catchment, evacuation capacity is an important consideration.

### **Why is my lot isolated from the adjacent uplift?**

The Department made the recommendation to remove all lots impacted by the PMF until further evacuation modelling can be undertaken in line with the Flood Advisory Panel advice. The Department will work with Council to progress the necessary strategic, disaster adaption planning for the catchment, and assess any planning proposals on their merit.

### **Does this rezoning mean changes to the flood planning levels?**

No, flood planning levels are set by Council as the flood plain manager. This planning proposal does not change flood planning levels.

### **What is the interaction with the proposed Low and Mid Rise Housing Reforms?**

The Low and Mid Rise Housing Reform is proposed to apply to areas zoned R3 Medium Density. In the Fairfield LGA, some R3 areas are below the PMF.

The Explanation of Intended Effects for the Reform identifies that the application of this reform to areas impacted by high risk flood plains was a matter to be resolved in consultation with agencies and councils following the Low and Mid Rise exhibition period.

### **What impact do changes to flood levels (AEP and PMF) have on property values?**

There are no changes to flood planning levels.

### **Will this lead to decreased land values for owners of land that will not be rezoned? Will this mean much higher insurance premiums for these landowners?**

The decisions regarding Fairfield Stage 2 do not change the current risk to life, flood behaviour (e.g. flood levels, frequencies and extents) or current planning controls for these properties.