



Flooding in Launceston

Renewing the levee system

Launceston is located at the confluence of three waterways, the South Esk river, the North Esk river and the kanamaluka /Tamar estuary. Floods in Launceston from high flows down either river system can be exacerbated by high tides in the estuary. Parts of early Launceston were built on the floodplain, and as a result of this, Launceston has suffered a number of floods throughout its history. The 1929 flood left 4,000 people homeless and prompted the decision to construct a series of flood levees around the lower lying portions of the city to provide protection from flooding. These levee systems have been adapted over the years. A significant levee renewal program was completed in 2015 to ensure ongoing structural stability of the levee system.

Community preparedness

Living in Launceston, it is important to understand your flood risk. During a flood, any levee system may over top or fail. Launceston is no exception, and if this happens, some properties in Launceston may be significantly damaged and people’s lives could be impacted for an extended period.

Knowing what you can do to be resilient if a flood event were to occur is important, even if your property is protected by a levee. Flood resilience is the ability to prepare for, live through and then return to normal household routines following a flood with the least amount of disruption.



The following tips will help you be more resilient:

- **Know your flood risk.** Review Council's flood mapping to understand how your property may be affected by river flooding. <https://www.launceston.tas.gov.au/Emergency-Management/Flood>
- **Flood proof your home.** Consider property modifications or flood resilient construction to reduce the impacts if floodwaters inundate your property.
- Prepare an **emergency kit** with essential items.
- **Plan** where you will evacuate to and make **provision for pets.**
- Understand the flood warning system. Listen to ABC local radio - 91.7 FM - **you will be told if you need to evacuate.**
- Consider items you want to move to safety during a flood, and how to best prepare your property - see '*Flooding in Launceston*' brochure and the City of Launceston website.

What is the City of Launceston doing to build community resilience to river flooding?

- Working closely with the State Emergency Service and Tasmania Police, keeping our **emergency management procedures** up to date
- Undertaking **regular inspections and maintenance** of our levees
- Currently revising **land use planning and development control** for flood prone lands, including those 'protected' by the levee system

- **Flood modelling and mapping.** Council first developed flood models in the 1950s alongside preparation for the original levee construction. The most recent flood maps and models were updated in early 2019 using current best practice modelling techniques
- **Flood awareness and education.** Council ensure that all new property owners within the flood prone areas are informed through the land information (337) certificates. Council also work regularly with schools and community groups to discuss flooding.

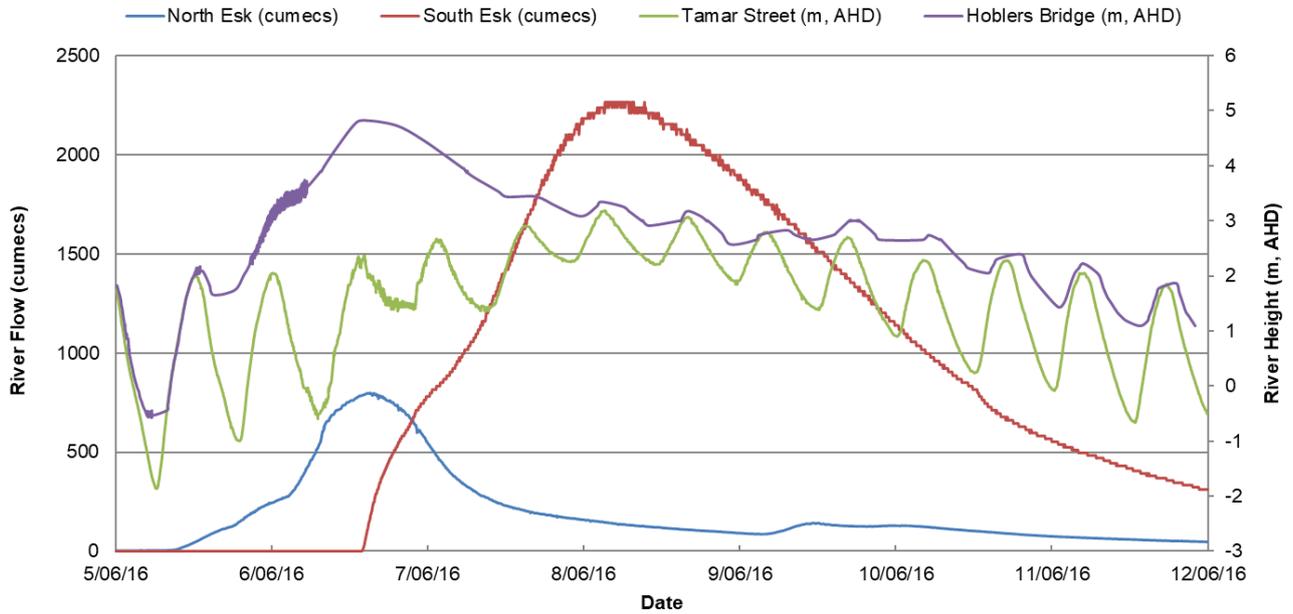
June 2016 flood event

The renewed levee system was tested during June 2016 when a significant flood event occurred. Launceston residents and community members remember the event well, and the flood resulted in the closure of major roadways around the city.

Data recorded during the flood event highlights the way that the three river systems interact and influence the flooding. The South Esk catchment is around 8.5 times larger than the North Esk catchment, and the South Esk is around 3 times longer than the North Esk. As a result, the June 2016 flood peak in the North Esk (shown in blue) was two days earlier, and had a significantly smaller flow, than the flood peak in the South Esk (shown in red).

Data also shows the influence that the tide still has on the flood levels at the different points along the North Esk; Tamar St (green) and Hoblers Bridge (purple).

June 2016 River Conditions



With thanks to the City of Launceston for providing this information.



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