

FLOOD WARNING MARKERS

helping you know
what to do in a flood



What is being done now?

While work continues to be done to investigate ways to improve and maintain the levees, it is important that people know what to do if there is a flood.

To help people understand how high the water is going to peak, Launceston City Council has erected warning markers on some of the Hydro poles in Invermay and Newstead. These markers have coloured bands, indicating the peak depth of the water in a flood.

If water is going to reach the markers, warning messages will be issued on the radio and by emergency services personnel by referring to the colour bands on the panel.

Colours

BLUE

up to a 20 year flood

YELLOW

up to a 50 year flood

RED

up to a 100 year flood



What can you do?

It is important you are informed about how best to prepare for a flood. While the new warning markers can help Council and Emergency Services Personnel communicate with you in a flood situation, there are important steps you can take now.

Launceston City Council's brochure Flood Protection in Launceston has information on

- ⇒ how to prepare for a flood
- ⇒ what to do in a warning situation
- ⇒ how to prepare an emergency kit
- ⇒ what to do if you need to evacuate.

Additional copies of the brochure are available from Council's Customer Service Centre, in the Town Hall, or by calling 6323 3000.

IMPORTANT

Use the flood marker closest to your home or business by listening to the radio (ABC Northern Tasmania or 7LA) for broadcasts about flood levels relating to the bands of colour.

More information

If you would like more information or assistance, you can call Council on 6323 3000.

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Launceston was settled at the junction of three rivers – the North Esk, South Esk and Tamar Rivers. These three rivers are fed by a system of rivers and lakes that covers 14% of Tasmania.

Most of Invermay and some of Newstead sit within a flood plain – the area which will flood in a natural river system. In fact, in Invermay the ground level is actually below the high tide.

When did Launceston last flood?

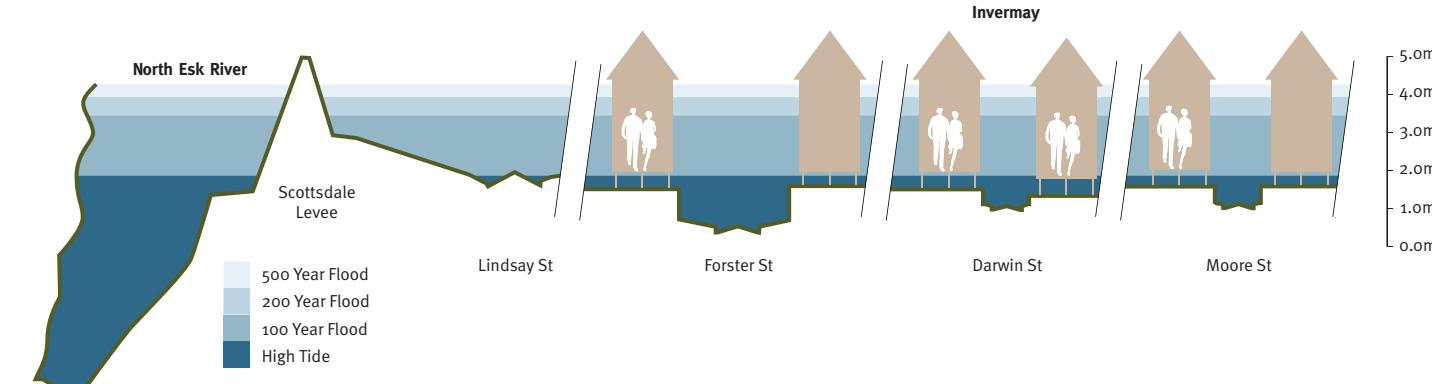
The last big flood occurred in 1929, when Invermay was devastated, making 4,000 people homeless in just one night. Before that, there were two occasions (in 1852 and 1863) when the water peaked higher than the 1929 flood. Since then, there have been smaller floods, but nothing as devastating as the 1929 flood.

What has been done to manage the flood risk?

Many of the early homes in Invermay were built on the flood plain, so after the 1929 flood it was decided that a system of levees was needed. In the 1960s, a series of levees – some as high as four metres – were built to protect the low lying areas on the flood plain, separating the City from the Rivers.

While these levees continue to offer some protection for the City, they have also been difficult to maintain, as the land they are built on next to the Rivers is mostly silt. Silt is a very poor foundation to build on and the levees naturally sink into the ground over time. In fact, the land is so unstable that three levees collapsed just after construction in 1965 and 1971.

However, any levee system may fail. Those in Launceston are no exception – they may collapse or water may flow over the top of them, and the adequacy of the system can not be guaranteed. Should the levees fail some properties in Launceston may be affected by flood waters isolating the property or even rising above the floor level.



Floods in Launceston 1801-2006

