



Greater Melbourne flood warning services

Werribee catchment

From July 2026, the Bureau of Meteorology is responsible for riverine flood forecasting and flood warning services in Greater Melbourne.

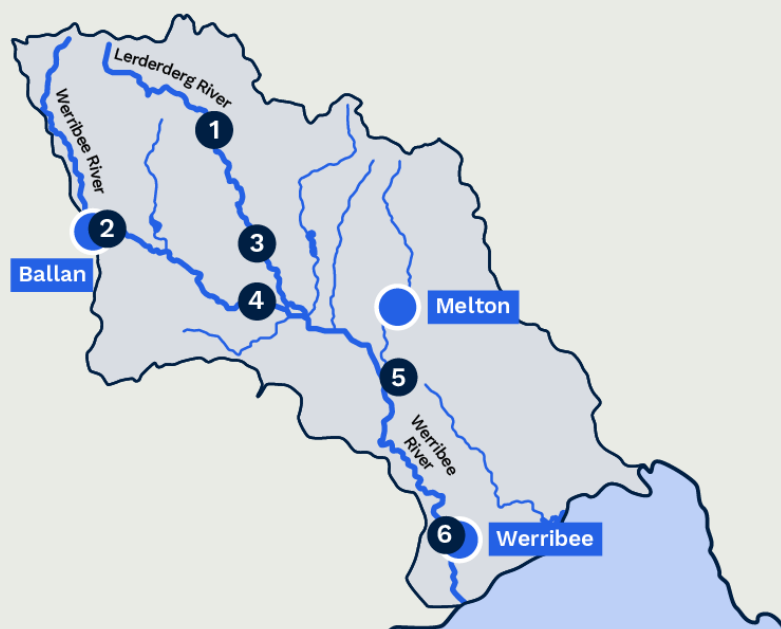
The improved flood warning service includes accurate and timely flood warnings for 6 sites across the Werribee catchment:

Forecast location	Flood level			Target lead time	
	Minor	Moderate	Major	Hours	Level
1 Lerderderg River at Sardine Creek (O'Briens Crossing)	2.1 m	3.0 m	3.5 m	3	Moderate
2 Werribee River at Ballan	1.6 m	2.1 m	3.0 m	–	–
3 Lerderderg River upstream Goodman Creek	3.3 m	3.8 m	4.0 m	0–3	Minor
4 Werribee River at Bacchus Marsh	4.4 m	5.2 m	5.6 m	0–3	Moderate
5 Werribee River at Melton Reservoir ML = megalitres	4,000 ML/day	35,000 ML/day	50,000 ML/day	–	–
6 Werribee River at Werribee (Cottrell St)*	2.7	4.5	5.4	6	Minor

* Where possible, flood warnings include a forecast of the peak (maximum) river height including timing at these locations.

– Some locations have no target lead time for warnings

Greater Melbourne Werribee catchment



The Bureau of Meteorology gives as much advance warning as possible before flooding is expected.

What riverine flood warnings does the bureau issue?

Flood watches provide early advice of developing weather that could lead to flooding. Flood watches are issued up to 4 days in advance.

Flood warnings let you know when flooding is likely or is already happening at a particular location.

What is in a flood warning?

Flood warnings can vary and may include a forecast about flood level (minor, moderate or major), including timing and a predicted peak river height at some locations.

For more information on flood warnings, visit www.bom.gov.au/resources/learn-and-explore/flood-knowledge-centre/flood-warning-services.

What are the target lead times for flood warnings?

The target lead time is how much time you get between your warning and the expected flood level.

You can use this lead time to take action to stay safe.

The lead time is a minimum target that may not always be met. In extreme or unusual weather events, the lead time may be less.

For example, if a forecast location has a target lead time of 3 hours, we aim to issue a warning 3 hours or more before the river is expected to be at least that height.

These are documented in the **Victorian flood service level specifications** and agreed in consultation with the Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES):

www.bom.gov.au/resources/learn-and-explore/flood-knowledge-centre/flood-warning-services#bom-anchor-list__item-service-level-specifications-for-floods

Why do lead times vary?

Lead times vary between forecast locations because all rivers respond differently to rainfall and runoff.

River size, geography, soil types, land use and nearby infrastructure all impact how quickly water levels rise.

River heights

Flood warnings use different terms to describe river heights:

- **Predicted river height** – this is the water level we forecast at a location. It may be when a river is likely to be at least minor, moderate or major flood levels. It may also forecast the **peak** – the highest level the river is expected to be during the flood.
- **Observed river height** – this is the water level measured at a gauge in the river. It's given in metres and usually measured against a local reference point.

During flood events we update the forecast river heights as more information becomes available.

The actual depth of flood water will vary across the floodplain and every flood is different.



Werribee River, Melbourne, Victoria.

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VicEmergency website, app and more

<https://linktr.ee/vicemergency>

Learn how to prepare to be flood ready and stay safe. Visit the Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) website: www.ses.vic.gov.au/plan-and-stay-safe/emergencies/flood