

Improving Flood Risk Information What We Heard Report



Introduction

The Department for Environment and Water (DEW) conducted a YourSAy survey in late 2024 to understand how industry stakeholders use the current WaterConnect portal and Flood Awareness map, and to identify areas for improvement. The survey explored preferences for accessing and sharing flood risk information and gauged support for developing standardised guidelines for flood studies statewide.

The survey was part of DEW's *Flood Information Management* project to develop a new or improved online resource for flood risk information in South Australia. The survey received 21 responses, providing invaluable feedback for the next stage of the project. The South Australian Government has committed \$818,000 towards the 3-year project.

Flood risk information includes flood studies and maps that help us understand the likelihood and potential impact of flooding in certain areas. It is based on studies that use scientific tools and data such as ground level information, rainfall and river data to predict where and how much water may flow during a flood. The results are then compared to actual historic flood events, where that information is available.

Engagement Results

Summary

The current WaterConnect portal was commonly described as difficult to use, with many respondents struggling to locate the right maps or reports. Slow load times and other technical issues were also noted as barriers.

Feedback on the current Flood Awareness map also indicated further room for improvement. Respondents suggested it could be enhanced with downloadable maps and reports, property-specific and custom spatial data, and improved search functionality. Respondents also highlighted that scenario comparison tools and the ability to restrict access to datasets would be valuable features.

Moving forward, interactive maps were seen as the preferred format to view flood risk information, with the ability to search by river or catchment and street address. But opinions were split on what terminology to use for the public, with some preferring plain-language descriptions and others precise technical terms.

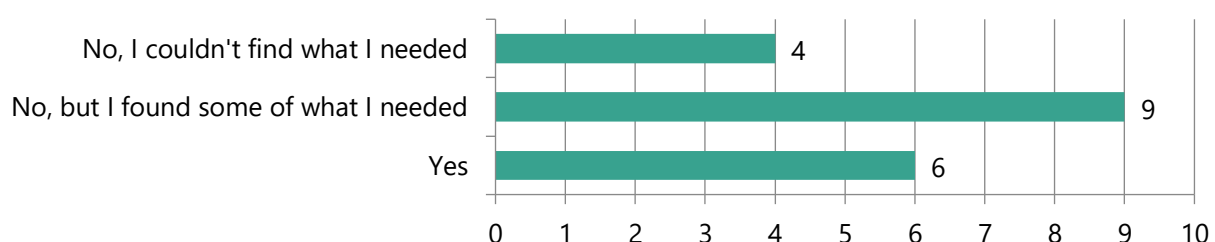
For sharing and accessing flood study data, respondents rated easier access to historical studies and a single statewide platform as important features for improvement. They also highlighted the need for standardised data formats, streamlined submission and retrieval, and stronger version control.

Most respondents agreed that developing standardised guidelines would improve the consistency and comparability of flood studies across South Australia. Climate change requirements, defined scenario outputs, intellectual property guidance, and standardised modelling were considered priorities for inclusion.

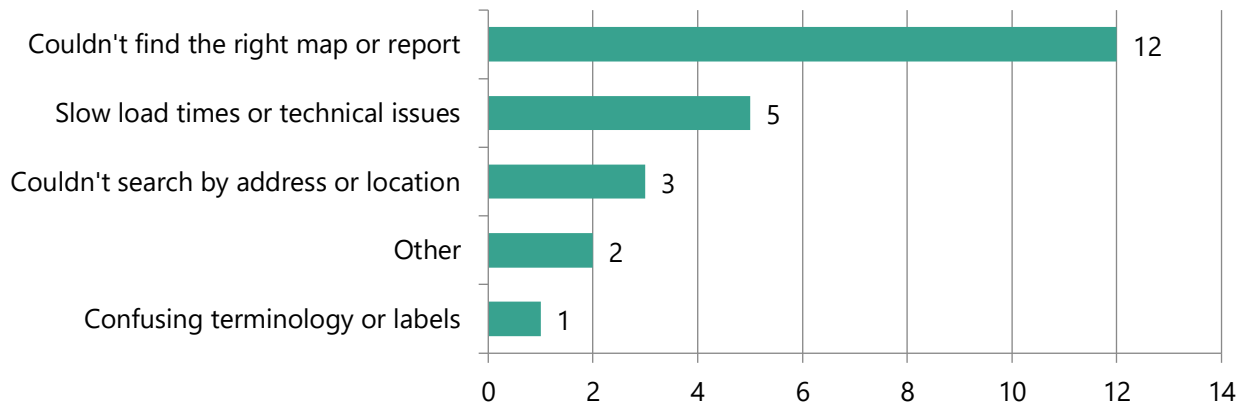
What we heard

Below are results from some of the survey's questions:

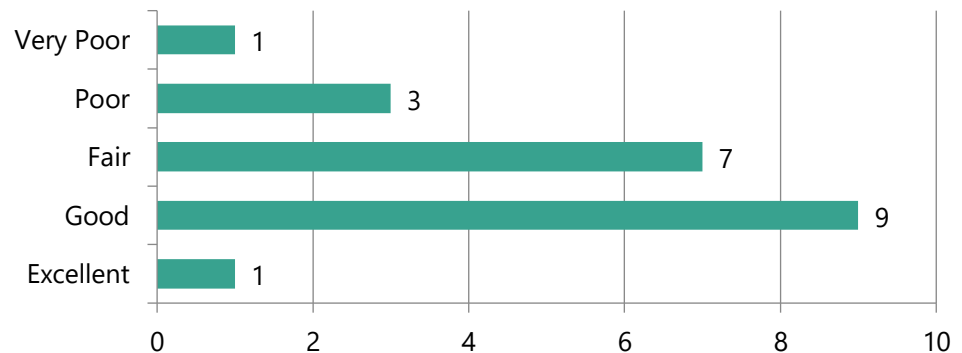
Were you able to complete your task using the WaterConnect portal?



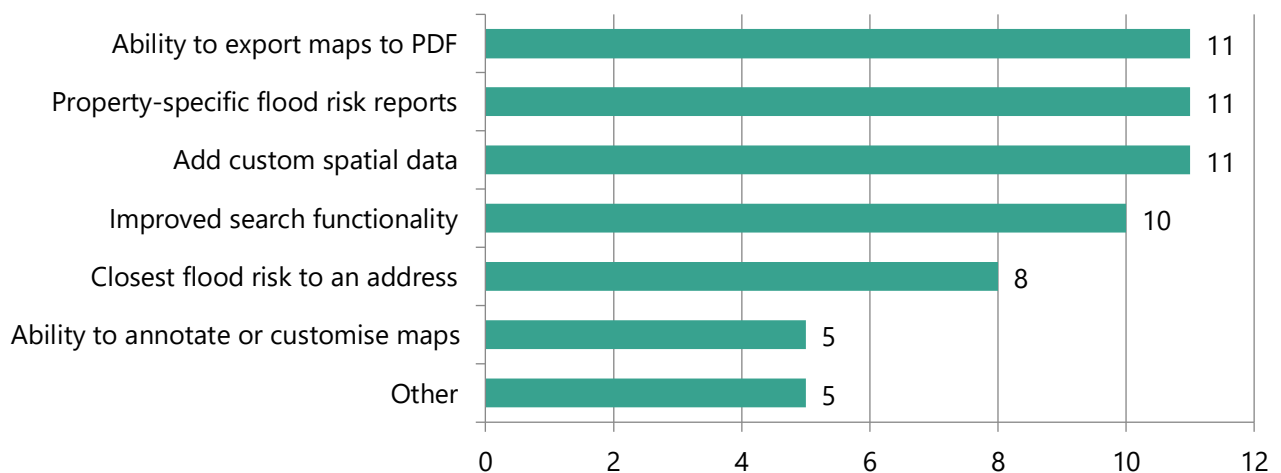
If you encountered any difficulties using the WaterConnect portal, what were they?



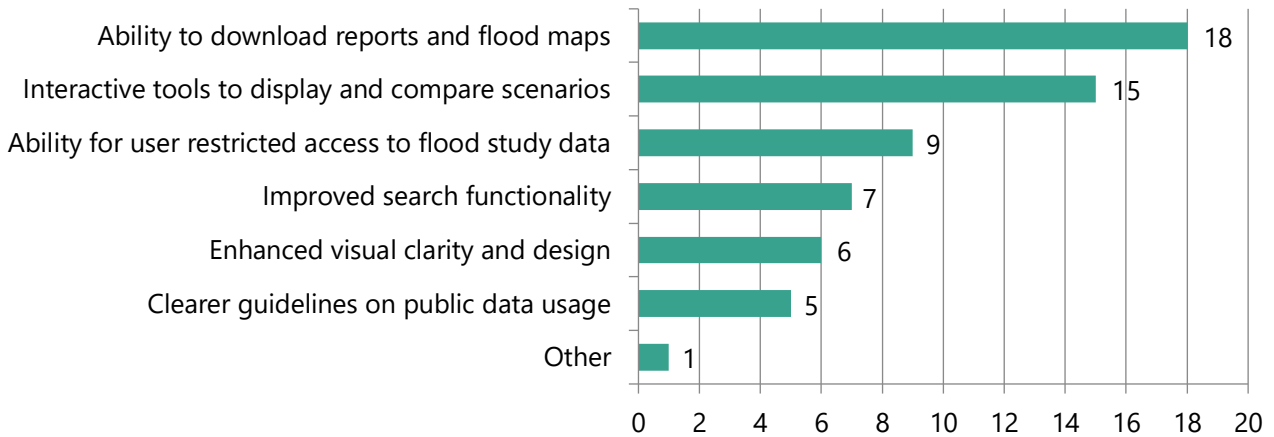
How would you rate your overall experience with the Flood Awareness map?



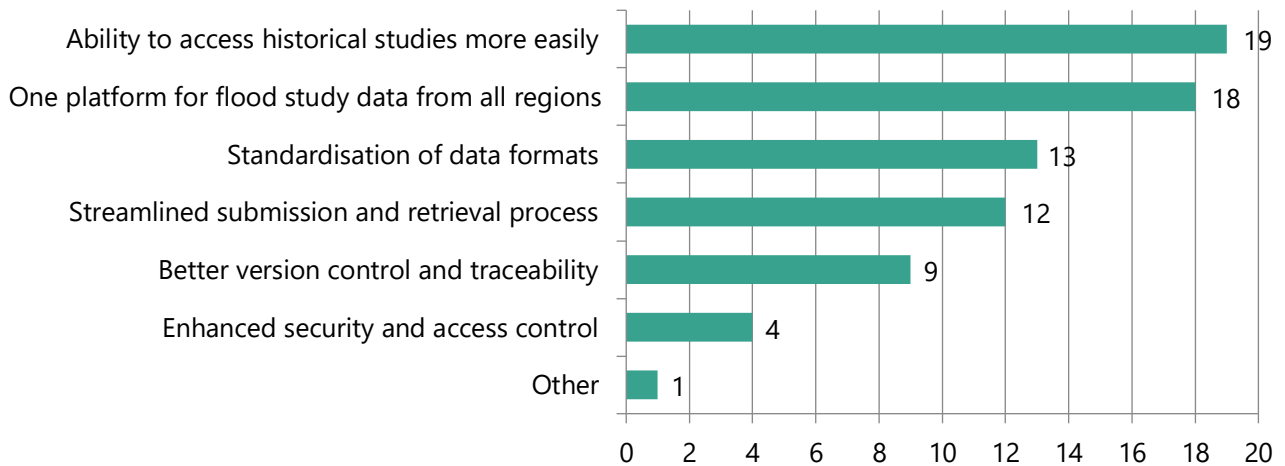
What specific improvements would make the Flood Awareness map more useful to you?



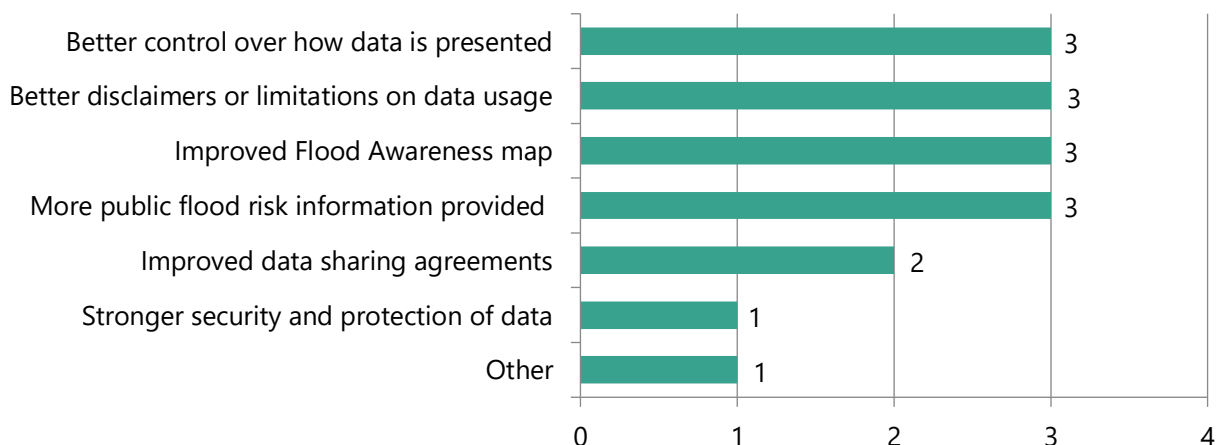
What features or improvements would make the public Flood Awareness map more useful to commissioning authorities, consultants, and agencies?



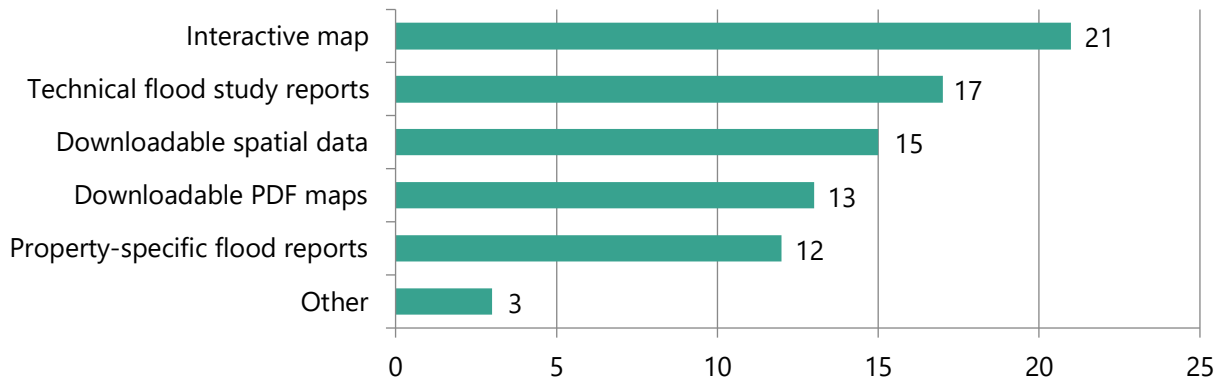
What features of a new flood information system would help you to share and access flood study data?



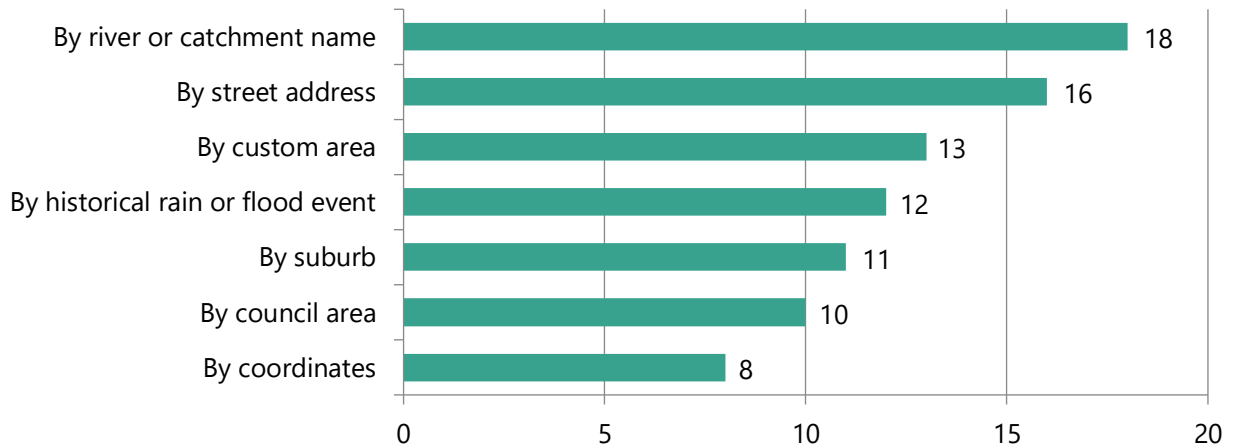
What would encourage you to make data (or more data) available on a public flood risk portal?



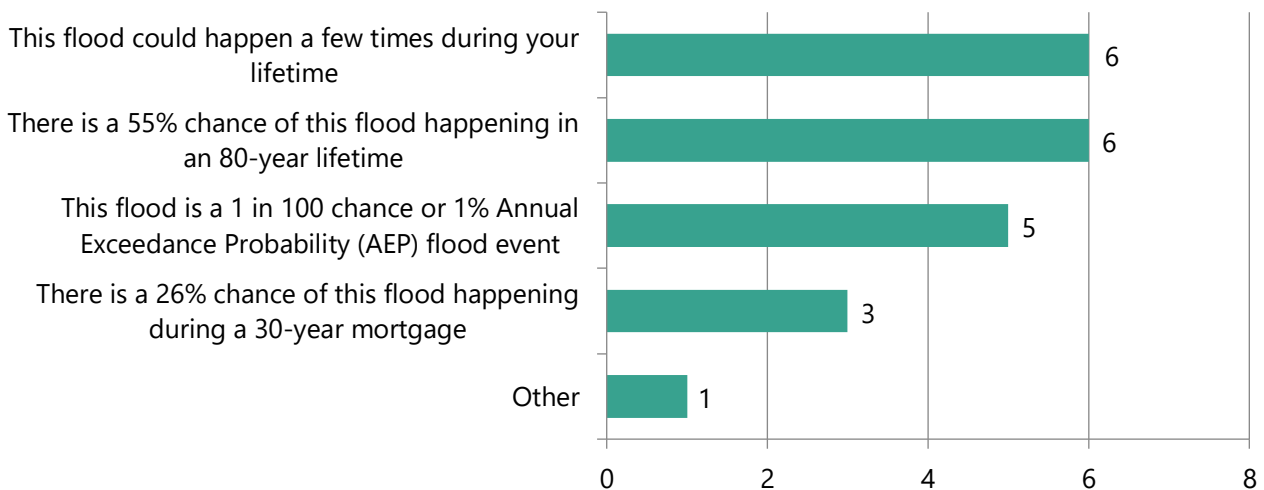
How would you like to view flood risk information?



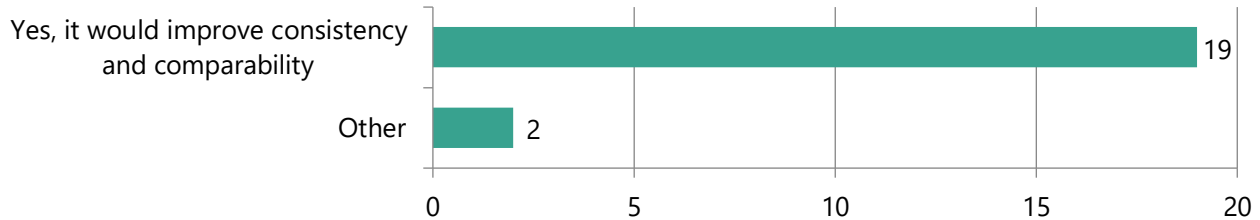
How would you like to search for flood risk information?



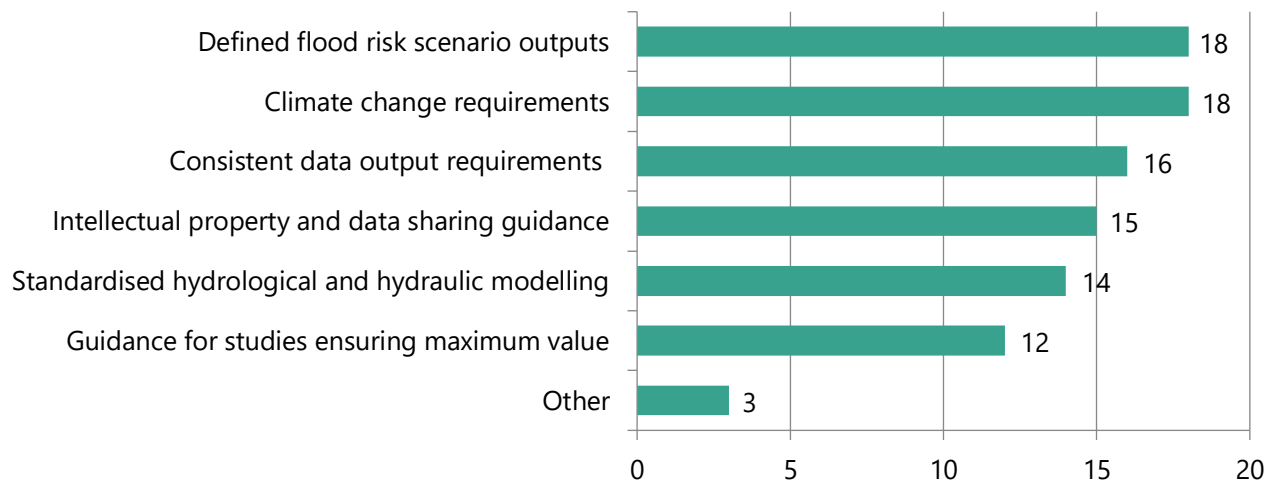
Which of the following statements presenting the likelihood of a flood occurring do you think is the easiest for the general public to understand?



Would standardised guidelines for commissioning and conducting flood studies improve the consistency and comparability of flood studies in South Australia?



What elements would you like to see included in standardised flood study guidelines?



Next steps

Insights from the survey with industry stakeholders have played a key role in developing standardised guidelines for flood studies and establishing user requirements for the new or improved flood risk information resource. The department will work to deliver a system that supports both internal staff and external agencies:

- **For internal staff:** The system will help manage the complete lifecycle of flood study data, from collection through to publication, underpinned by robust governance and compliance monitoring. The system will aim to improve processing workflows, validation procedures, metadata management, publication coordination, as well as administration functions.
- **For external agencies:** The system will support the delivery of flood risk information in formats tailored to the operational needs of councils, emergency services, government agencies, and water authorities. It will include pre-configured reporting templates, geographic filtering, and automated distribution capabilities.

Survey respondents who gave permission to be contacted again about the project will be given the opportunity to take part in end-user testing.