

4 Consultation

4.1 Background

Engaging with the community and key stakeholders on the Review of Porters Creek Flood Study is a crucial part of improving their understanding of the flood behaviour in the study area and its impacts. The insights gained from consulting with the community will help inform the management of flood risk in the study area, and consider available information gathered through the sharing of feedback on the study.

A Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (CSEP) for the Flood Study was developed in consultation with Council. The CSEP provides details of previous engagement, the current engagement purpose and objectives, relevant engagement principals, the identification and analysis of relevant stakeholders to inform engagement approach, and details of the engagement methods implemented. Key aspects of the CSEP are provided in **Sections 4.2, 4.3, and 4.5**, with the full CSEP provided in **Appendix B**.

The outcomes of the engagement undertaken as part of this Flood Study is provided in **Sections 4.6, 4.7, and 4.8**.

4.2 Previous Engagement

Earlier consultation was undertaken to inform the following studies and plans:

- Porters Creek Flood Study (Cardno, 2009),
- Porters Creek Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan (Cardno, 2012), and
- Wyong River Catchment Floodplain Management Study and Plan (Catchment Simulation Solutions, 2020).

An overview of the earlier consultation activities and outcomes is included below.

4.2.1 Porters Creek Flood Study (Cardno, 2009)

Community consultation was undertaken by the former Wyong Shire Council (now Central Coast Council) in 2009 through the Council's Tuggerah Lakes Estuary, Coastal and Floodplain Management Committee to inform the development of the 2009 Flood Study. Information obtained from the community included extensive reports on the June 2007 flood event, which was used for the flood model calibration.

4.2.2 Porters Creek Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan (Cardno, 2012)

The development of the 2012 FRMSP included engagement with the community on the FRMP and FRMS, as per the Floodplain Risk Management process.

Key stakeholders were identified early in the development of the FRMSP and included representatives from the SES, OEH, private residents and critical facilities (including schools, aged care centres and health facilities) likely to be impacted by the proposed works.

A resident questionnaire was delivered to approximately 5,000 community members for the Porters Creek catchment in January 2010, and 700 responses were received. 40% of respondents had experienced some form of flooding as a result of property inundation, road inundation, creek overflow or neighbourhood inundation. The majority of the events causing the observed flooding were in October 2004, June 2007, or June 2008. 70% of respondents didn't expect their property to be flooded in the future.

The most preferred flood mitigation options were environmental channel improvement and natural flowpath preservation. Other options that were reasonably popular were planning controls, flood forecasting and culvert/bridge upgrades. Less popular options were levees, flood education, flood forecasting and retarding basins. Noting that responses relating to floodplain management options are more relevance to the future FRMSP rather than the updated Flood Study currently being undertaken.

The Floodplain Management Committee, consisting of representatives from Wyong Shire Council, the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH), SES and the community, provided oversight and review of the FRMSP throughout its duration.

4.2.3 Wyong River Catchment Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan (Catchment Simulation Solutions, 2020)

A community questionnaire, two public information sessions and community drop-in sessions were the engagement techniques used to gather community and stakeholder feedback on this FRMSP.

In total, 256 questionnaire responses were received and the key findings indicated:

- 77% of respondents have experienced some form of inundation or disruption as a result of flooding in the catchment, including traffic disruptions, garage inundation and house or business being inundated above floor level.
- The population has a mixed level of flood awareness. 31% of respondents admitted that they did not know whether their house or business was potentially flood liable or not. However, of the 34% who claimed to know that their house or business could not be flooded, more than half are located within the PMF extent (as defined in the 'Wyong River Catchment Flood Study').
- Respondents in the catchment generally underestimated how often they might experience flooding. Around 70% of those who believed their property could flood in a 1% AEP event correctly assessed their risk. Most of the remaining respondents who incorrectly thought they were at risk in such an event are located in Mardi. For the PMF event, about 84% of respondents who believed their property could flood were correct; however, 61% of these properties are actually within the 1% AEP extent, meaning they could be flooded far more frequently than they assumed.
- Should a flood event occur, 63% of respondents indicated they would remain at home and only 8% indicated they would evacuate to an official evacuation centre.

Other notable findings from the Public Exhibition included:

- Council reported that most residents in the area are knowledgeable from a flooding perspective and will often track gauge levels to gain an understanding of whether they are safe to “stay put.”
- A number of individuals felt the Tuggerah Lake entrance at The Entrance was a primary contributor to the flooding problems across the lower Wyong River catchment. They suggested that the entrance channel should be dredged and a breakwater constructed to maintain a permanent opening.
- Lack of maintenance in drainage channels is of concern to residents and particularly blocked culverts (particularly on the northern floodplain of the lower Wyong River).

- Safe emergency evacuation procedures should be formalised particularly for occupants of facilities that are likely to be more vulnerable during floods, such as schools, child care centres and aged care facilities (including Wyong Aged Care facility which was identified as vulnerable with all access roads inundated during the 2007 flood).

4.3 Engagement Objectives

The community engagement objectives were to:

- Obtain historical flood and community engagement information,
- Build on the previous consultation undertaken and ensure that communities feel that their earlier feedback was heard and taken on board,
- Raise awareness of the strategic and staged approach to the management of flood risk and the Porters Creek catchment,
- Foster community confidence by building trust and collaboration around the study outcomes,
- Gather input and feedback on the study, and
- Provide essential information to the SES to enable the effective preparation and implementation of local flood plans to deal with flood emergency response.

4.4 Stakeholder Analysis

A stakeholder matrix was developed within the CSEP (**Appendix B**) following the project inception. This matrix included an assessment of the key stakeholders and their level of interest, influence, and impact on the development of the Flood Study. The approach to stakeholder consultation was informed by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2). This stakeholder analysis also included the suitable level of consultation identified for each stakeholder based on the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) consultation spectrum. The level of engagement with each stakeholder was also refined in consultation with Council and DCCEEW.

4.5 Stakeholder and Community Engagement Methods Selection

A variety of communication and engagement methods were used to encourage stakeholder and community involvement and participation in the consultation process. The communication and engagement methods, as well as the details of each method used, are outlined below in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1. Communication and Engagement Methods

Method	Details
Communication Methods	
Electronic Newsletter (Coast Connect ENews) and Print Newsletter	An electronic newsletter was sent out on 27 August 2025 and 10 September 2025 to Porters Creek community members. The August newsletter was delivered via email to 20,027 recipients and was opened by 6,642 recipients, and the September newsletter was delivered to 20,255 recipients and was opened by 5,497 recipients. Printed copies of the newsletter were issued on 21 August 2025, titled <i>'Have your say on what's happening locally'</i> (refer to the excerpt in Figure 4-1. below) and then on 4 September 2025. The latter newsletter issued was titled <i>'Shape flood risk planning across the Coast'</i>, and both of these publications had 62,000+ readers.

Have your say on what's happening locally

View our engagement platform, Your Voice Our Coast to explore projects on exhibition and provide your feedback! Projects include Woy Woy Masterplan, Toukley Desalination Water Treatment Plant, Flood Policy, Open Coast Coastal Management Plan, draft Squirrel Glider Species Management Plan and more!

Visit **yourvoiceourcoast.com** to have your say and shape the future of the Central Coast.



Figure 4-1. Printed Newsletter – Issued August 2025

Central Coast Council Website

The Your Voice Our Coast [webpage](#) was updated ahead of the consultation period to include:

- An overview of the Project,
- Maps of the Porters Creek study area (including waterways),
- An online questionnaire,
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), and
- Details on the importance of the Flood Study, how to provide input, and how to seek more information.

Method	Details
Media Releases	A Media Release titled <i>Working together to improve our waterways and reduce flood risks</i> was published on 9 September 2025 (refer to the excerpt from the Media Release in Figure 4-2. below). The Media Release focused on various projects and initiatives in the Council area that community members can provide their feedback on, including the Porters Creek Flood Study. Media articles were then included in the NBN TV News Bulletin coverage and also the Coast Community News printed publication on 21 August 2025 and 4 September 2025.

Central Coast Council Media Release

8 September 2025

Working together to improve our waterways and reduce flood risks



Central Coast Council is working to improve the management of our region's diverse waterways and advancing flood mitigation efforts in vulnerable locations, with several current and upcoming projects open for community feedback.

Central Coast Council Director Environment and Planning, Luke Nicholls said that through collaboration, Council and the community are, improving our waterways and reducing flood risks together.

"Flood management, water quality and coastal erosion are major priorities for both Council and the community. The geographical nature of our region presents an array of challenges and we're working proactively to ensure the Central Coast remains a place we can all enjoy," Mr Nicholls said.

"We have several projects open, or soon to be open, for public comment, and encourage the community to provide feedback. This feedback will guide our approach to improving the management and condition of our waterways, our coastline and reducing flood risks."

Figure 4-2. Media Release – 9 September 2025

Social Media	Social media posts were featured on Council's Facebook and Instagram pages on 9 September 2025, encouraging the community to provide their input on the Flood Study (Facebook - 2,460 views and 1,578 reach; Instagram – 1,621 views and 502 reach). A reminder for the community to submit their input and complete the questionnaire was posted on 17 September 2025, ahead of the closure of the initial consultation period (Facebook – 2,610 views and 1,791 reach, Instagram 1,377 views and 534 reach). To further promote the opportunity for the community to participate in the extended consultation period, an Instagram and Facebook post was published on 24 September 2025 (Facebook – 3,321 views and 2,276 reach, Instagram -8,118 views and 3,477 reach).
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Method	Details
Notification Letter to Community Members and Property Owners	2,807 notification letters were distributed to community members and property owners located within the study area on the 22nd of September 2025. These included: • an overview of the study, • the purpose of the Review of Porters Creek Flood Study, and • outlining how the community can participate through completing the online or printed survey.
Community and Stakeholder Engagement Methods	
Key Stakeholder Notifications	Notifications to the following key stakeholders were made ahead of the public release of the questionnaire on Council’s website to encourage their feedback: • SES • DCCEEW • Central Coast Council staff.
Questionnaire	A total of 93 online and printed responses to the questionnaire were received during the initial consultation period from Monday, 25 August 2025, to Thursday, 9 October 2025. A summary of the feedback received via the questionnaire is detailed in Section 4.7.

4.6 Stakeholder Engagement

The CSEP identified key stakeholders to engage with in order to raise awareness of the Porters Creek Flood Study consultation program. These stakeholders have continued to receive updates as the project progresses, and include:

- DCCEEW,
- SES, and
- Central Coast Council Staff.

4.7 Community Questionnaire Feedback

During the initial consultation period (Monday 25 August 2025 to Thursday 9 October 2025), 93 questionnaire responses were received to the questionnaire, which is considered a low response rate relative to the population. A total of 93 responses to the questionnaire were received: 46 submitted online via Council’s ‘Your Voice Your Coast’ website, and 47 returned as printed copies by email or post or scanned and emailed. Respondents were invited to share comments about their flooding experiences, and several community members contributed anecdotal evidence including photographic evidence of flood behaviour.

Most respondents to the Porters Creek Flood Study questionnaire were from the 2259 postcode (83%), which covers Wyong, Tuggerah, Kanwal, and Hamlyn Terrace. A smaller number came from nearby suburbs in postcode 2250 (3%) in the Gosford area, including Gosford, Erina, West Gosford, Niagara Park, and Lisarow. Another 3% were from postcode 2263, which includes Lake Haven, Norah Head, Noraville, Toukley, Charmhaven, and Gorokan.

A copy of the questionnaire is included in **Appendix C**, along with a summary of the online responses.

The questionnaire was promoted through multiple communication channels, including Council’s website, a media release, e-newsletter and print newsletter, and social media posts on Instagram and

Facebook. Key stakeholders were informed before the questionnaire was distributed to help boost awareness and encourage participation.

Additionally, a notification letter was mailed to 2,807 properties within the study area, which included a postage-paid envelope to facilitate the return of completed hard copy surveys. Figure 4-3 illustrates the spread of respondents based on their length of time spent in the study area.

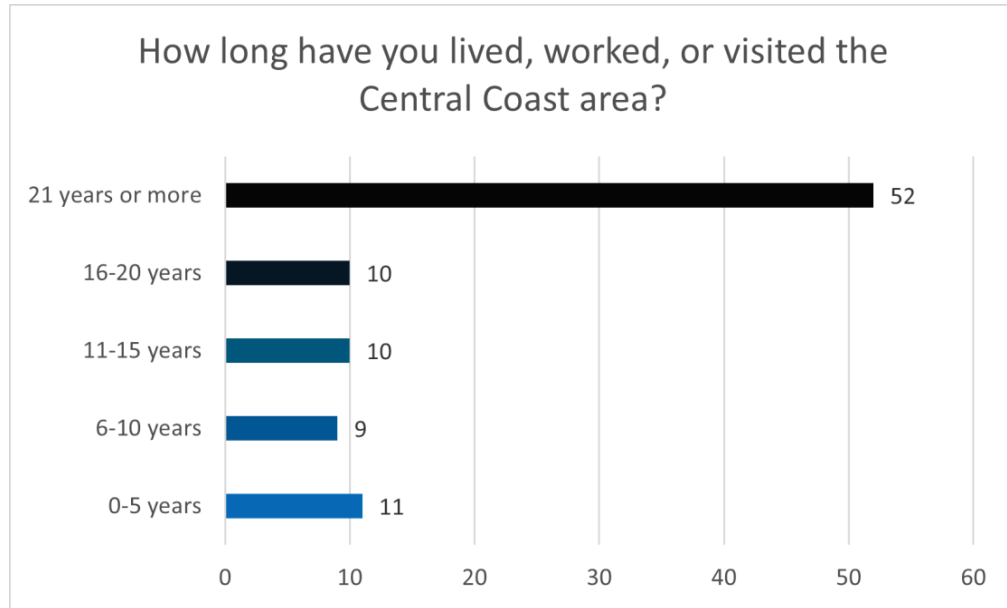


Figure 4-3. Survey Results – Length of Time in Study Area

Figure 4-4 shows responses to several questions aimed at understanding how community members behave during a flood risk scenario. Most respondents are likely to await instruction from the SES or Council; otherwise respondents are likely to remain in the catchment. Therefore, the SES and Council should be aware of this finding to ensure that, in the event of a flood, the community can be adequately alerted. The results also reveal that mobile applications are the most common source for flood information and updates, closely followed by the radio and other internet-based sources (i.e. social media and Council’s website). This suggests that these communication channels should be utilised for raising awareness to prepare the community for future flood events. The type of information respondents most commonly seek during a flood event is road closures, followed by evacuation notices and predicted flood levels.

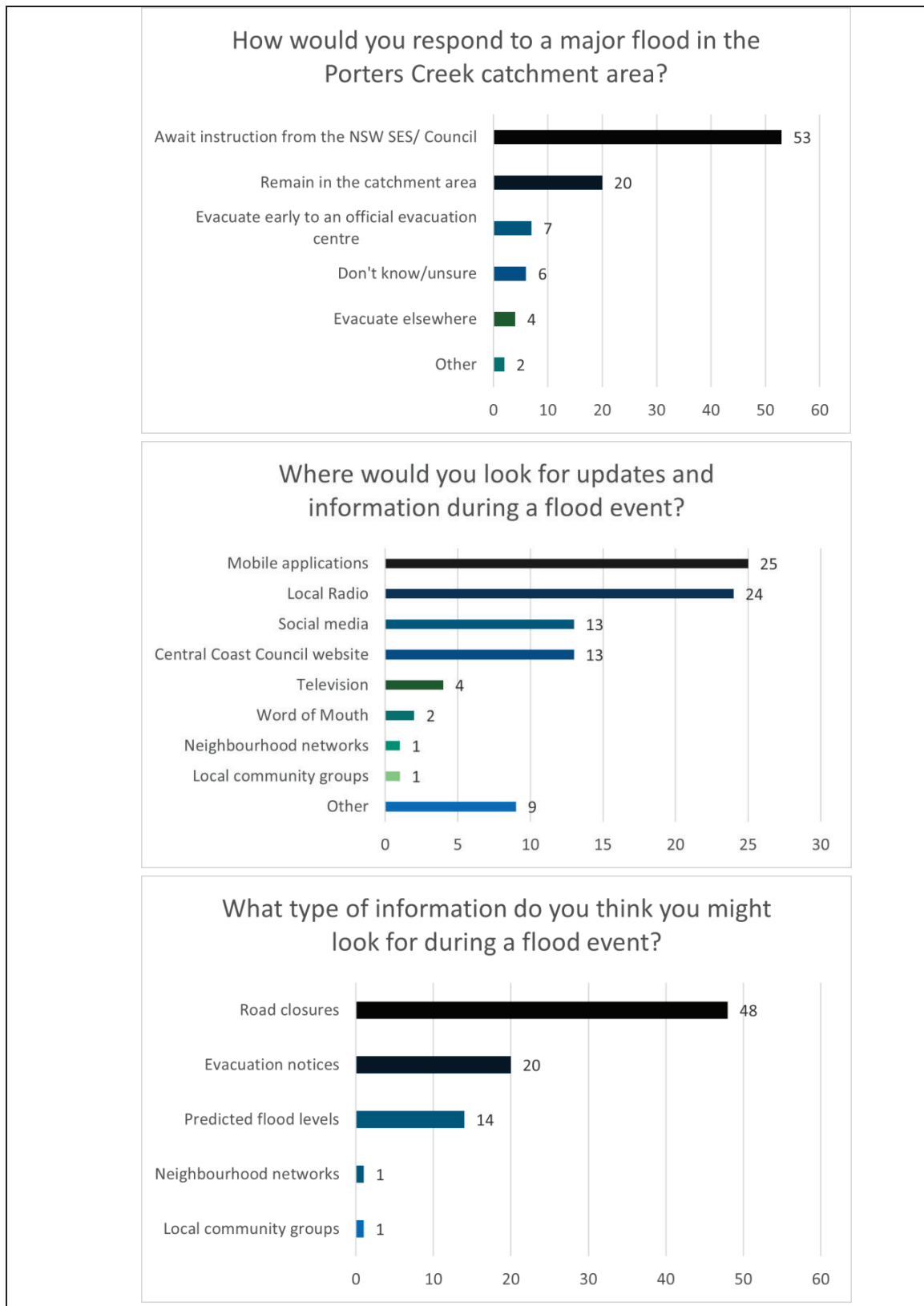


Figure 4-4. Survey Results – Community Members Behaviour During a Flood Event

Almost all respondents (93%) identified as owner-occupiers; whereas 3% of respondents are tenants, and 2% live with family, as shown in Figure 4-5.

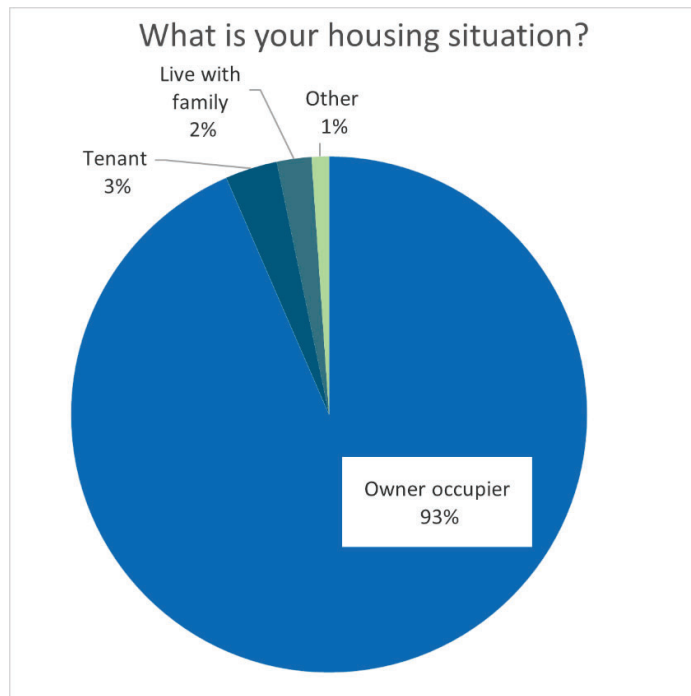


Figure 4-5. Survey Results – Housing Situation

There is moderate awareness of flooding in the community, as demonstrated in Figure 4-6, with only 43% of respondents stating they were aware of flooding. This finding also correlated with the broader feedback received within the survey when providing specific details on known flood events, that included several community members noting that they were not aware of flooding occurring in this study area. Similarly, most respondents had not experienced flooding in the Porters Creek catchment area (67% of respondents as shown in Figure 4-6).

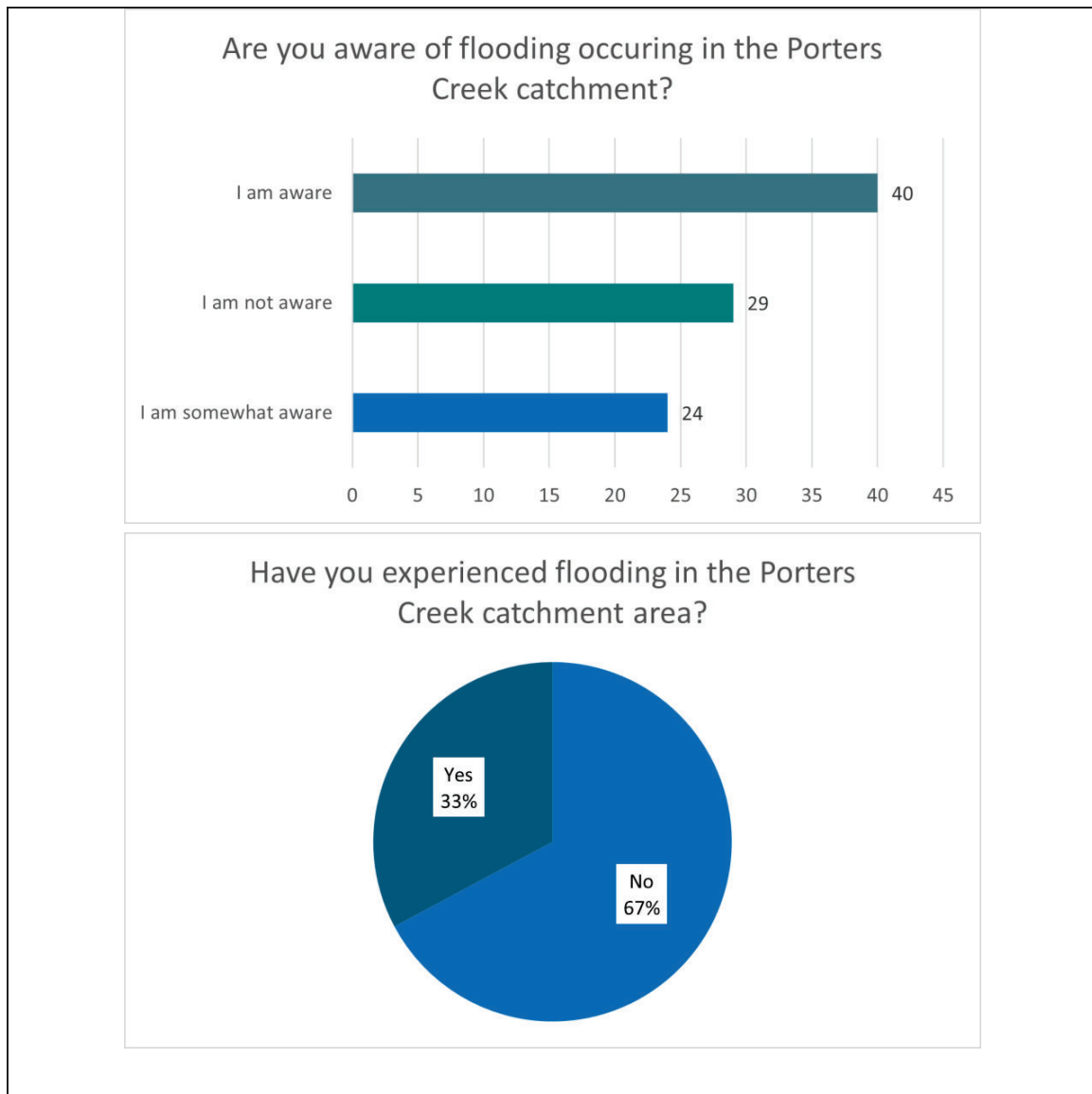


Figure 4-6. Survey Results – Awareness of Flooding in the Community

4.7.1 Flood Event Observations

Community flood observations were reviewed to determine whether any could be used to inform the calibration and validation of the flood model. Whilst all flood observations and descriptions are useful in terms of understanding locations of higher risk, only specific observations are useful for calibration and validation of flood models.

Specific flood events identified in the community responses are listed in Table 4-2, along with commentary regarding the suitability of the observations for the purpose of model calibration and validation. It should be noted that Table 4-2 only includes events where a specific date was provided, and does not include any general references to months or years when flooding was reported.

Table 4-2. Community Flood Observations

Flood Event Date	Number of Observations	Details	Observations Suitable for Calibration/Validation?
23 May 2025	2	One submission included a photograph of flooding along Sterling Way in Hamlyn Terrace. However, it is not specified whether this occurred on the 6 May or 25 May in 2025, and whether or not this was at the peak of the flood event.	No. There are an insufficient number of reliable observations to inform model calibration/validation.
6 May 2025	1		No. There are an insufficient number of reliable observations to inform model calibration/validation.
30 April 2024	1	One submission included photographs of flooding along Lakewood Drive and the adjacent watercourse in Hamlyn Terrace. Whilst an indicative flood level could potentially be derived from the images, it is uncertain whether or not this was at the peak of the flood event.	No. There are an insufficient number of reliable observations to inform model calibration/validation.
11 June 2011	1	One submission referred to flooding in Brookfield Close; however, no specific details of the flooding were provided.	No. There are an insufficient number of reliable observations to inform model calibration/validation.
8 June 2007	2	One submission referred to photographs of flooding that were previously provided to Council following the 8 June 2007 flood event. Another submission referred to flooding near Brookfield Close in Jilliby; however, no specific details of the flooding were provided.	No. However, the 8 June 2007 event will be used for model calibration using observations collected as part of the 2009 Flood Study.
1 October 2004	1	One submission included a photograph of potential flooding around Dehavilland Circuit in Hamlyn Terrace. However, the image quality is not sufficient to estimate flood levels.	No. However, the 1 October 2004 event will be used for model validation using observations collected as part of the 2009 Flood Study.

Future versions of the report will include a map overlaying the community observation locations with modelled flood depth for a suitable design event.

4.8 Public Exhibition Outcomes

To be completed following the public exhibition of the Draft Flood Study.