

Drain Clearing Works

Information for local residents

The Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) is undertaking drain clearing works in the Williamstown area. This is part of the management of the Hunter Valley Flood Mitigation Scheme (HVFMS), which is designed to mitigate and protect the local community from flooding.

What is drain clearing?

Drain clearing is the mechanical removal of weeds from the drain. This involves two stages - the first is to spray the weeds with herbicide a few weeks prior to the works. This makes removing the weeds much easier, and reduces the amount of soil that is disturbed.

The second stage is the actual removal of the weeds using a “reed bucket” with excavation machinery, as shown in the image below.



Once the weeds have been removed, they will be stockpiled for drying. These stockpiles will be inspected regularly during this period, prior to spreading across the area.

What drains are being cleared?

The drains that are part of this program are Dawson’s Drain, Fourteen Foot Drain, Ten Foot Drain and Tilligerry Creek drain. Over the

page is a map which highlights in green the sections of these drains that will be cleared.

How long will the work take?

The works are expected to take approximately two months to complete, but this will be dependent upon site conditions encountered during the works.

How will I know if work will be undertaken on my property?

Residents who have drains that contain sections scheduled for clearing will be contacted directly by OEH.

If you are not contacted by OEH, your property will not be impacted or disturbed by the work.

How will this work impact PFAS in the area?

A review by the Science Division in OEH has found that the work is unlikely to have a significant impact on PFAS contamination in the area. Only some sections of the drains will be cleared.

There may be some localised effects such as increased surface water flow through those sections of the drains where works are being undertaken.

The works are being undertaken to improve drainage of surface water in the area. The work will assist in reducing the impacts of local flooding and reduce residents' exposure to PFAS contaminated surface water during periods of high rainfall.

Will an increase in surface water flow mean an increase in PFAS concentrations in seafood, especially those from Fullerton Cove and Tilligerry Creek?

Any increase in surface water flow through these drains is unlikely to have a long-term impact on PFAS concentrations in Fullerton Cove or Tilligerry Creek. This includes PFAS concentrations found in seafood in these locations.

What monitoring will be done during the works?

The NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) will be undertaking water sampling during the works. This will allow us to check for any unexpected impacts throughout the process.

Where can I find more information?

More information on PFAS is available at <http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/media/information/williamtown.htm>

If you have any questions or concerns, call the NSW Environment Line on **131 555**

